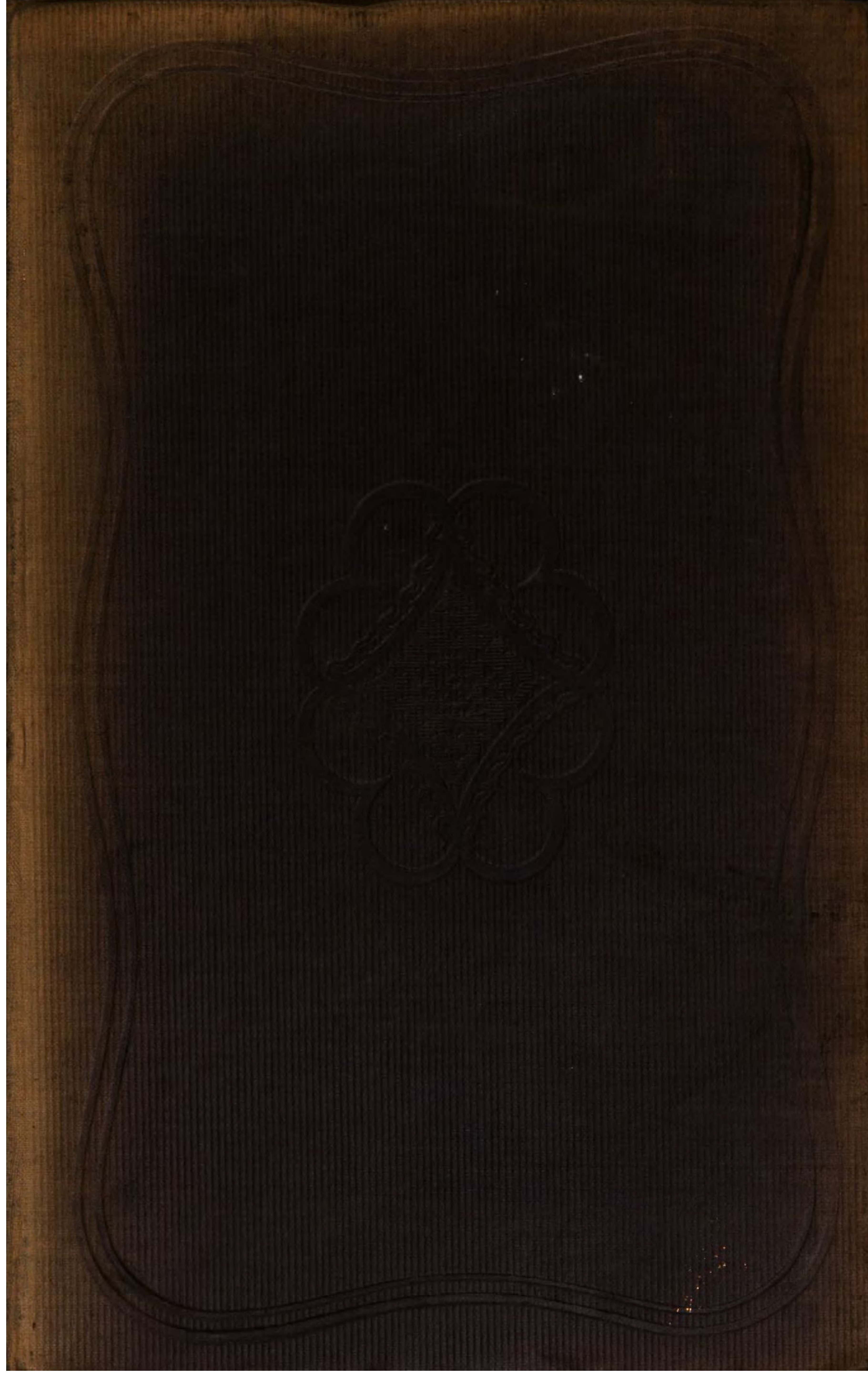




Salem

1636 K

Life

W. H. B. L. F.

W. H. B. L. F.

W. H. B. L. F.

W. H. B. L. F.

W. H. B. L. F.

M Y L I F E.

BY

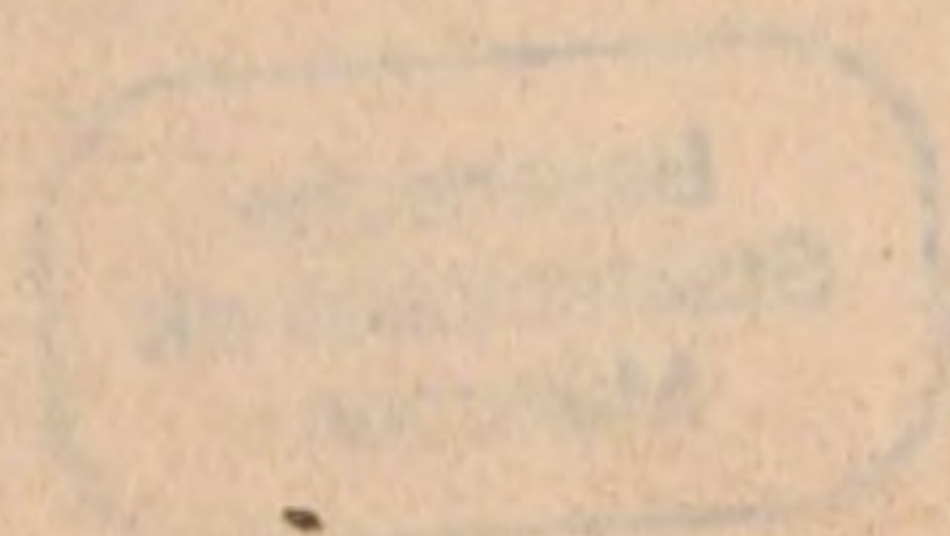
A N E X - D I S S E N T E R.

Veritas nihil veretur nisi abscondi.

LONDON:

JAMES FRASER, REGENT STREET.

M.DCCC.XLI.



Printed by J. L. Cox and Sons, 75, Great Queen Street,
Lincoln's-Inn Fields.



DEDICATION.



TO THE

CLERGY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

THIS little history is dedicated ; in the humble hope that its publication, at the present eventful period in the History of the Church to which they are attached, and at whose altars they minister in Holy things, may tend to excite them more zealously than ever to vindicate her rights and maintain her supremacy, against the multiplied and increasing attacks of her united assailants; accompanied by the desire that it may also serve to instruct the laity of that church in the absurdities, contradictions, errors, and dangers of *Modern Dissenterism*.

February, 1841.

INTRODUCTION.

THE attitude of the Dissenters in Great Britain and Ireland in 1841, is that of hostility to the Church of England. They are no longer Nonconformists, but enemies. They follow not in the footsteps of such men as Isaac Watts and Philip Doddridge, paying respectful homage to the talent, learning, and piety of an authorized and established Protestant priesthood, but have united themselves to the phalanx of opposition to the Church of England, conducted by such chiefs as Robert Aspland, Thomas Binney, James Bennett, and Messrs. Burnett, Fox, and Thorn. In addition indeed to these leaders of the "Hue and Cry" combination against the Church of England, there are the Committees of the Church Rate Abolition Society, of the Society for the Protection of Religious Liberty, of the Deputies of the Presbyterian, Independent, and Baptist Dissenters, and, to make use of the very words of James Bennett in his History of Dissenters from 1808 to 1838 "of the heterodox

Presbyterians, who in March, 1836, seceded from the general body, and formed themselves into a new association"—or, in other terms, of the Socinians. The champions in the cause of multiform dissent each sally forth with their bucklers, their swords, their helmets, and in some cases their battleaxes. Many resemble the Don Quixotes of far-famed memory, whilst others, like Mr. Thorn (the Sancho Panzas of the party), afford much mirth to those who watch their Lilliputian vehemence, and at the same time the anxiety with which the more gigantic leaders of the Dissenters, seek to restrain "their zealous but imprudent brethren." Nonconformity was once respectable for its sobriety, its purity of intention, its freedom from worldly-mindedness, its aversion to noise and display, its spiritual character, its distaste for controversy, and its real heart-rejoicing at the preaching of Evangelical truth in the Church of England. Modern times have produced *some* specimens of this description of Nonconformists, and we mention with pleasure the names of the late Dr. Winter, John Clayton, sen., John Townsend, Mr. Burder, and Robert Hall. Educated in Nonconformist sentiments, they remained Nonconformists;—but from their lips never escaped the language of hostility to a church from whose discipline they differed, but to whose truly Catholic spirit and Christian doctrines

they rendered many frequent and spontaneous tributes of respect.

Nonconformity could once boast of a BAXTER, who was so moderate in respect to forms of church government, that he loved Episcopalians as his brethren; of a FLAVEL, whose last efforts were directed to restrain the enemies of the Church of England from acts of hostility, and to seek to unite Separatists from the Establishment by forming a union of Presbyterians and Independents; of a BATES, who declared that it was neither faction, fancy, nor humour, which made him a Nonconformist; of a HENRY, who, if he had lived in 1841, would have been a clergyman of the Church of England; of a HOWE, who would never have preached at Silver Street Chapel, had he not been driven by the Act of Uniformity from his church at Torrington, and who delighted to preach and to read the prayers of the Church of England at Utrecht, whilst he resided on the Continent; of a WARREN, who was so moderate a Presbyterian, that when King Charles was restored, he proceeded to Scotland, and was ordained both Deacon and Presbyter by the Bishop of Withern; of a JOHN BUNYAN, who never allowed his Nonconformity to lead him to attack the church with which he desired to remain in friendly alliance; and of a MATTHEW HENRY, who hesitated some time as to

whether he should not seek for episcopal ordination, and decided at last to be ordained by Presbyters, because there was some doubt as to whether he could obtain the former, without submitting to the oaths and declarations to which he objected. Nor can there be any objection on the part of an Episcopalian, well instructed in the history of his own church, and of the sects which have risen up to oppose it, to speak with respect and reverence of the piety and worth of Daniel Williams, John Gale, Samuel Pomfret, Matthew Clarke, Edmund Calamy, and Dr. Foster. But are the Dissenters of 1841 the real descendants of the Nonconformists whose names we have recorded, and to whose purity of intentions, though mistaken opinions, we bear a willing testimony? We have no hesitation in answering in the negative. There are a few places of public worship in London, and some half-dozen in the English counties, where the quiet and calm piety of mistaken, but respected Nonconformity, still exists, and where in the deep and high-built pews of former times, *some* pious, heartfelt prayers still rise to the God of the Sabbath, and the Saviour of his people. But with these few exceptions, all the old symbols of pure, modest, and genuine Nonconformity, have disappeared, and such men as Burnett, Knibb, Fox, and Binney, lead on the mixed and discordant throng to a joint attack on that church.

of their forefathers, which has withstood the far different controversies of the HOWES, HENRYS, OWENS, and CALAMYS of days never to return.

Take the report of the Dissenting Missionary Society, called *The London Missionary Society*, and look at the names of the provincial directors of that association; and what do you see? The students from the Hackney Seminary have now become Dissenting teachers. The founder, JOHN EYRE, a clergyman of the Church of England, would be astounded at the offspring of his seminary. It can be no matter of astonishment that the residuary legatee of one of the first friends to the institution (Charles Townsend, Esq.) should hesitate as to paying to so nondescript a society as the Village Itinerancy and Hackney Seminary the enormous sum of ten thousand pounds, since the institutions in question have now become a modern Dissenting association.

Where are the Franklands, the Jollies, the Matthew Warrens, the Stephen James's, the Tallents, the Bryans, the Benions, the John Reynolds's, and even the Spademans of former times? These were tutors worthy of the titles they bore; who, instead of lecturing their students in divinity "on the duties of opposing *tithes* and *church* rates," directed their minds to the attainment of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and of studying the Fathers of the English Church,

who were the founders in England of sound theology. And who that has visited Mr. Thomas Wilson's academy for Dissenting students at Highbury, notwithstanding the admitted talent of the teacher of Oriental languages in that establishment, and is acquainted with the foundation, character, and progress of similar institutions among Dissenters, in the 17th and 18th centuries, can refrain from comparisons lamentably unfavourable to the present epoch? Take the list of Dissenting ministers of the present day: and what do we see? Not five learned men, not ten profound scholars; but talking men, business men, platform men, public meeting men, pamphlet-writing men, debating and discussing men, not about the weightier matters of the law, but about personal controversies, Dissenting marriages, Episcopal church rates, tithes, and "*compelling*" clergymen to read over the bodies of Socinians and Arians, in the Protestant churchyards of our Trinitarian ancestors, the solemn declaration that the departed "*Un*" believers "*knew that their Redeemer lived, and that he should stand at the latter day upon the earth;*" though, alas! the defunct believed in no Redeemer at all, and died in avowed hostility to that church which is now to be "*compelled*" to receive and honour them. And while the earth is being cast upon the coffin, the Dissenters of 1841 require, that the clergy

of the Established Church shall be *compelled* to pronounce over the dead body of the deceased *Socinian*: “We therefore commit his body to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life *through our Lord Jesus Christ*,” in whom he has not believed, and from whose blessed sacrifice, sufferings, death, and blood, he expected neither salvation nor resurrection. The *Nonconformity* of past ages never dreamt of making such requirements. The *Dissenterism* of 1841 “jokes at the intrigue,” whilst the ministers at their quarterly associations rub their hands with glee at the progress of “the movement against the Church of England,” and toast, in old port and brown sherry, “SUCCESS TO THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE!!”

If we compare the learning and piety of the conductors of the Dissenting seminaries of former times, when such men as David Jennings and Philip Doddridge were at their head, with the present tutors at Cheshunt, Newport Pagnel, Homerton, Highbury, Coward College, Gosport, Exeter, Airedale, Blackburn, York, Birmingham, Stepney, Bristol, Horton, Loughborough, Newtown, Neuaddlwyd, Bala, Ponty-Pool, Dublin, and even Rotherham, though one of the best of this motley group, we may easily understand the difference which exists between the theo-

logy, learning, personal character, and piety of the students of 1841, and those at the close of the last century. It is at once curious and interesting to compare the method of education pursued by Dr. Doddridge, as handed down to us by his biographer, Mr. Orton, with the course adopted by the "Office-bearers" in the "Educational Department" of *The Spring Hill College, Birmingham*, of which Sarah Glover and Elizabeth Mansfield were the founders, and of which *John Angell James* is the chairman! "IN THE THEOLOGICAL CURRICULUM," says the pedantic prospectus of this establishment, there is to be, "3rdly, a course on *Ecclesiastical Antiquities*, unfolding the inventions and corruptions of men in the positive institutions of Christianity, with their causes and effects." When the name of TIMOTHY EAST, of Birmingham, the well-known political debater of the ultra Radical school, and one of the most bitter enemies not only of church establishments, but of the clergy themselves, is to be found, as it is found, amongst the members of the Educational Board of this society, it is easy to understand what are intended by those "inventions and corruptions of men" which are to be "*unfolded*" in a course on "*Ecclesiastical Antiquities*."

The course on "*Pastoral Science*," in which "*pastoral didactics*" are to be "illustrated," must be

equally characteristic of this Spring Hill Seminary ; but what the “*pastoral liturgies*” can be, it is difficult to imagine, at least if Mr. James’s and Mr. East’s modes of conducting Dissenting worship are to be taken as models.

The results of the present systems of Dissenting seminaries are the following : the students learn a smattering of Hebrew, and but little more of Latin or of Greek ; they are profoundly versed in political Dissenting history, and know by heart the bills for repealing the Test and Corporation Acts, and for rendering marriage a merely civil institution ; but they are ignorant of the history of the Church, and imagine all were Pagans before the Act of Uniformity ; they are adepts in discussions on tithes, church rates, and a national system of education ; but they are only instructed in the objections to, and not in the arguments in favour of, the two former measures, and would make every little school-boy and school-girl a recipient of the *voluntary principle* in matters of religion, and a competent judge as to the form of worship he or she would prefer. Their *comparative theology* is that of the difference between Conformity and Nonconformity ; and their *Christian dogmatics*, is a syllabus of the cases of Mr. Child, of Bungay, of one Mr. Baines, and of some other successful resisters of the civil and ecclesiastical laws of this realm.

Thus instructed in these seminaries of Dissenterism, the initiated get by heart the modern attacks made on the Church by the least enlightened and least pious of her opponents, and ring perpetual changes on objections which have been as often refuted as they have been uncourteously repeated. Some of these modern Dissenting controversialists confine not their attacks to false and injurious diatribes against the Church of England, but are equally vehement in their language as applied to the reformed Churches of France, Holland, Switzerland, and Prussia. Many of these, who scorn the discipline and hierarchy of our Church all the year, too often appear on the platforms of Bible Societies, and boast of an attachment to the persons and doctrines of evangelical clergymen, yet to whose support they exhort their congregations not to contribute, the tithes of whose parishes they entreat their deacons not to pay, and whose churches they would allow to crumble into dust, in default of the necessary church-rates being paid by the parishioners.

This is the character of Dissenterism in 1841. But we must not be mistaken. By Dissenterism we do *not* mean Wesleyanism. James Bennett, of Rotherham, has endeavoured, indeed, in his History of the Dissenters from 1808 to 1838, to confound or to amalgamate the Wesleyan Methodists with the Dissenters. Taught by the experience of the last thirty

years that it is most dangerous for the Dissenters to separate themselves from the influential and increasing body to which we have referred, he who, in the two first volumes of his History of Dissenters, offended the Methodists by his unkind and inaccurate statements, has now pursued a different course ; and the biography of Doctor Adam Clarke and of Mr. Richard Watson, as well as an account of the Wesleyan Theological Institution, are incorporated in the third volume of Dissenting Records. But to this we object, No ;—the Dissenters are the Independents, the Baptists, the Quakers, the Presbyterians (to a certain extent), the Socinians, Arians, and Universalists, the Swedenborgians, the Separatists, the Scotch Baptists, the Scotch Independents, the Southcottians, the Irvingites, the Plymouth Brethren, the Ranters, and the Evangelical Quakers ; but the Wesleyans are irregular Churchmen. Deeply, most deeply, do we regret what we term their “ *irregularity* :” but respecting, as they do, our Church ; maintaining, as they do, the necessity for the union of the Church with the State ; loving, as they do, the form of worship handed down by our Church ; and supporting, as they do, the lawful and spiritual claims of the clergy of our Church ; as well as supporting them in their efforts against all the attempts of modern Dissenting Vandalism to overthrow it ; we should be at

once unjust and ungrateful did we not insist that the Wesleyan Methodists are NOT DISSENTERS. Right joyous then should we be, and that in the largest sense, we hope, of evangelical satisfaction and of Christian triumph, if we could see the plan and the hopes of the Rev. Richard Hodgson, M. A. (Evening Lecturer of St. Peter's, Cornhill), carried into effect, and if the plan for their union and more effective co-operation with the Church could be made available. The heads of that body, the bishops of that denomination, those to whom the lay members and the junior ministers look up with filial awe and well-merited respect, partake, we are sure, of a large portion of this feeling. They know how little divides us. They know the sentiments cherished by their founder to that Church, of which, in spite of all his clerical irregularities in his partial secession, he remained a minister to the end of his days. They know that George Whitfield, Rowland Hill, the Countess of Huntingdon, and indeed nearly all the leaders of a certain movement which took place in the world from 100 to 70 years since, were all seriously, deeply, religiously attached to Church establishments, and especially to the Church of England. They know that, in proportion as the separation from that Church has only been partial, the new sects have been vigorous and spiritual. Who can compare,

as a spiritual and truly Christian body, the Independents, for example, with the Wesleyan Methodists; or the Baptists, with either the followers of George Whitfield, or of Lady Huntingdon? The difference is immeasurable. We speak not of individual exceptions, for every Church can produce some bright spirit, some glorious soul emancipated from the trammels of the church to which it belongs, as even Rome can boast of a pious Bossuet and an amiable Fenelon; but we speak of the mass of the Dissenters of 1841 when we say, that the *general character* of both preachers and teachers is not spiritual. This is not the case with the Wesleyan Methodists. Abroad, their missionaries are instructed to render honour to whom honour is due, and tribute to whom tribute. Whilst Mr. Knibb, the Baptist missionary, denounces all West India magistrates, planters, and proprietors, as “scoundrels,” “rascals,” “dolts,” “idiots,” (yes, we have heard him), and seeks, forsooth, to dragoon the West India proprietors into the opinions of the “Baptist Board,” the Wesleyan missionaries preach subordination, respect to property, patience, forbearance, gratitude, and obedience. At home, the Wesleyan Travelling Preachers are instructed by the Conference to feel, that loyalty is more than a virtue—that it is a grace; that the kingdom of their heavenly Master is not of this world; that it is a blessed

thing to have a Christian monarch, Christian laws, a protected Sabbath, a parochial clergy, a public and free edifice in every district, where the pauper and the noble meet on equal terms to worship the God of their fathers ; and that such institutions will be held in reverence by all who fear God and keep his commandments.

In the observations, then, which we have made, and which will hereafter occur in this Introduction and volume, as to the character of Dissenterism in 1841, it will be distinctly borne in mind by our readers, that we except Wesleyan Methodists from these remarks.

But we cannot except from our reprobation “ *The Evangelical Voluntary Church Association*,” with its “ *Voluntary* ” under its direction, and its Chairman, Sir Culling Eardly Smith. An open enemy is less dangerous, less subtle, less really to be feared, than a half or lukewarm friend. The Church of England is no bastard church. Its discipline, doctrines, and worship, are founded on the Holy Scriptures. Not on the opinions of the Fathers, however venerable ;—not on traditions, however, in some instances, respectable ; not on the sentiments and impressions of men, however virtuous their motives, as in the cases of John Wesley and George Whitfield ;—but only and solely on the word of God. Those who are not *for*

this Church are *against* her. There can be no neutrality ; no half baptisms ; no half regeneration ; no half confirmation, and half admission into the Church ; no half communions ; no half ordinations ; no half calls to the ministry ; no half liturgies ; half litanies ; dissected prayer books, and mutilated forms of worship. The Catholic Church *in* England, or the Protestant Church *of* England, are one and the same church. Free from the cobwebs of Puseyism, the idolatries of Popery, and the upstart, self-confiding in, and self-conceited creations of, modern Dissenterism, the Church of England still remains firm, built as she is on the Rock of Ages. When the "*Evangelical Voluntary Church Association*" addresses itself to the public for support, to whom does it apply ? Not to the archbishops, the bishops, the deans, the prebendaries, or the other branches of the Church hierarchy ; nor even to the rector, the vicar, or the curate, but to Dissenters ! One of its most noisy and popular orators, Mr. Burnett, the Dissenting teacher at Camberwell, said, at a meeting held at Hertford (and his speech has been published by the Association), "If you will read, you will see the State Church has Acts of Parliament—but not the Bible to support her. She will regret the day she sent M'Neile to prop her ; he will only show her weakness ; she is so closely allied to Rome, she must *go*

with her. Is she not the great impediment to the spread of the Gospel in this land?" It is false then and wicked to induce, or seek to induce, in the mind of any one, the conviction that this "*Voluntary Church Association*," is any other than an enemy to the Church of England.

We have said, "that the attitude of the Dissenters in Great Britain and Ireland in 1841 is that of hostility to the Church of England." We have shown this, from the difference between the Nonconformity and Nonconformists of former periods, and of the present epoch, from the character of modern Dissenting seminaries, and from the difference which exists between the conduct of the Wesleyan Methodists towards the Church, and that of Dissenters.

But this is not sufficient. Let us look at the associations formed by Dissenters to attack the Church, to diminish or stop her revenues, to bring her clergy into contempt or hatred, to prevent her Holy Temples from being kept in repair, to separate her from the State, to curtail the revenues and influence of her hierarchy; to deprive her of tithes; to take away from her that supremacy she *ought* to exercise over the religious instruction of the masses of the people; to compel her clergy to act as mere automatons at the administration of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; to make them mere registrars of births,

deaths, and marriages ; to force them against their consciences to pronounce a benediction over the graves of those who have lived during fifty, sixty, and even threescore years, not only in direct hostility to the Church, but even to the Christian religion ; to desecrate Christian churchyards by feuds forced upon the clergy, from which they would willingly fly to the ends of the earth to avoid ; and finally, to hold up the clergy of the Church to the disrespect, suspicion, distrust, and even contempt and obloquy of the working classes. The tracts of Mr. Thorn, advertised so industriously in *THE PATRIOT*, are a lamentable specimen of that spirit of modern Dissenterism, which, rejecting the authority of centuries, and the examples of the wise and good of their own body in former times, sets itself up against all that is venerable in that Church, which even to this day, in a large portion of the kingdom, alone supplies spiritual instruction to a perishing and sinful population. We are aware that here and there a Dissenting teacher and a Dissenting layman is to be found, who protest against the ruthlessness, the vituperation, and the perversity of modern Dissenterism. But this is *not* enough. “To come out from amongst them” is the only good evidence which in such cases can be given of heartfelt disapprobation. Silent protests never effected the Reformation. Martin Luther did

something more than write polite letters on gilt-edged paper, marked "*private and confidential*," when he attacked the Whore of Babylon, and dethroned her. Although then we respect and love, as private men, good citizens, and sincere Christians, those Dissenting teachers of the timid school, who *privately* protest against, and who will not imitate the errors of their modern Dissenting brethren, we call on them to form themselves into a Nonconformist body. Let them call themselves "*Doddridgeites*," or "*Owenites*," or "*Herveyites*," or what they will; but let them not (in default of joining our church, which would be the best of all) lie under the imputation of belonging to the violent faction of 1841, if they are only the followers of the ministers ejected by the Act of Uniformity.

Let us now look at the ASSOCIATIONS formed to overthrow the Church of England—at the agents employed—at the systems of operation—and at the objects, both direct and indirect, which it is proposed to accomplish by these varied but combined measures.

"WHAT DO THE DISSENTERS WANT?" asked George the Third of Mr. Pitt, when conversing on the views taken by Bishop Prettyman, as to the necessity for restricting Dissenting teachers, and preventing preaching in the open air. Mr. Pitt replied, that they had stated to him they only required to en-

joy the same degree of liberty they had hitherto possessed. George the Third was satisfied, Mr. Pitt was induced to dissuade the Bishop from pressing the measure, and Bishop Prettyman's Bill was indefinitely postponed.

“WHAT DO THE DISSENTERS WANT NOW?” asked the Prince of Wales, when in 1809 Lord Sidmouth introduced his celebrated bill for preventing improper persons from escaping civil burdens, by obtaining certificates that they were Dissenting ministers. He was informed that they only demanded the rejection of the bill. Why? was the second inquiry: to which it was replied, because the practical operation of the bill would be to prevent village preaching. The Wesleyan Methodists, not from hostility to the Church, but from an apprehension that their system of local preaching would be interfered with, joined for this time, but for this time only, the various classes of Dissenters; and through that union, and that only, the bill was lost. But were the Dissenters satisfied? No. Though Lord Liverpool opposed the bill, and thus secured its defeat, the Dissenters at once set to work to obtain *the repeal of the Toleration Act*, to procure an unlimited right to preach, teach, and open chapels, and to commence that system of attacks on the Church which were begun under the auspices of “*The Protestant Society*

for the Protection of Religious Liberty,” and are now going on after hosts of concessions to the assailants on the part of the Church so attacked, under the patronage of Messrs. Burnett, Binney, Fox, and Thorn.

The NEW TOLERATION ACT of 1812 was an immense and astounding favour granted to Protestant Dissenters, as well as to Wesleyan and Calvinistic Methodists. Mr. John Bogue, who had written in conjunction with Mr. Bennett their two first volumes of the History of Dissenters, avowed that he never expected to witness such concessions as these. The Prince Regent asked the Archbishop of Canterbury, “My Lord Primate, what do the Dissenters want now?” His Grace replied, “The repeal of the laws of Charles the Second, your Majesty, which sought to prevent the mischief that might arise from persons refusing to take lawful oaths ; which restrained Non-conformists from inhabiting corporations ; and which sought to suppress seditious conventicles.” “And why is the *last* to be repealed?” asked the Regent. “To give way to more liberal provisions, your Majesty ; for we entertain no other feelings than those of affection for those who differ from us in religious matters.” So the bill passed. But were the Dissenters satisfied ? No.

In 1813, the “*right*” of Dissenting missionaries to enter India was proclaimed, admitted, and secured ;

and this at the very time when the extension of the State Establishment of Religion to the British Colonies, was proclaimed by the then leaders of the Dissenting movement as a retrograde measure.

In 1815, Dissenters required that their chapels, though in some cases sources of great emolument to the proprietors, and bringing in very frequently large incomes to laymen, should not be compelled to pay any parochial rates ; and an act of parliament was passed in their favour. Were the Dissenters satisfied ? No. They had passed the Rubicon. To a certain period they had defended themselves from what they considered unjust attacks. Then they had sought for the repeal of, to them, obnoxious laws. But now they assumed the *offensive*. Though the Episcopal religion is that of the State, and connected with it by all the fundamental institutions of the country ; though it is the religion of the Crown, and of both houses of parliament ; though it is the religion of every parish and hamlet in the country, and in multitudes of districts, even to this hour, the *sole* religion ; yet the Dissenters now began, for the first time in their history, to require *perfect equality* for themselves and their multiform species of faith, discipline, and worship, with the Established Church of the land. This was soon shown by the introduction of the bill in favour of those Dissenters who denied

the fundamental doctrine of the Trinity :—and Socinians, once viewed with apprehension, were now recognised by a majority in the British Parliament as *entitled* as an *inalienable right* ! to preach and teach their heresies to the ignorant and unwary. From that moment heresy was countenanced by act of Parliament, and Messrs. Fox, Belsham, and Aspland were by this measure, and by the New Toleration Act, placed on precisely the same footing as the Clergy and Bishops of the Protestant Established Church of England. From that time the blasphemy and profaneness of denying the doctrine of the Trinity were treated as no offences, either against a Protestant Church, a Protestant government, or a Protestant community ; and the Socinians have amply availed themselves not only of the spirit, but also of the letter of the law, for Mr. Fox admits to his Moorfields chapel, at so much per head, a by no means small or ignorant auditory, to listen to his lectures on unsacred subjects, and to his diatribes against Church Establishments and Episcopalianism. Did the Dissenters of Cromwell's time show the same lenity as the Church of England has done to their opponents ? But were the Dissenters satisfied now ? Oh, no ! From this time forward they resolved to demand every thing—to oppose the Church every where—to become uniformly the assailants—

and to contest inch by inch with the national religion and the national clergy their influence over the rural as well as manufacturing population ; and to deprive the Church of the education of the rising generation. When, in 1820, Lord Brougham (then Henry Brougham) brought into the House of Commons his bill to create a national system of education overpowered by the mass of evidence which arrived from every side in favour of the learning, talent, liberality, benevolence, and piety of the clergy of the Established Church, he proposed to enact that the schoolmasters of his intended schools, should be members of that Church, and give the only evidence they could do of such membership, *viz.*, a certificate that they had taken the Holy Sacrament at church six months previously to their election. But the Dissenters opposed him, cried at the top of their voices that Brougham, the hearer of Belsham, in Essex Street Chapel, was a traitor, and declared that the Schism Bill of Queen Anne's time was not more intolerant. The Dissenters required, that all schoolmasters of all sects and opinions, should be charged with the education of the masses of children of a Protestant country like Great Britain ; and the Arian, Jew, Socinian, or Infidel, provided he was a good reader, writer, and arithmetician, had, to adopt their shibboleth, the same "*inalienable right*" to become the

national schoolmasters of the rising generation. So Henry Brougham was defeated : and he was proscribed by his Dissenting brethren. But were the Dissenters satisfied ? No. They had new objects to pursue, and new results to gain.

When a million was granted by parliament for building NEW CHURCHES ; when it was demonstrated to the country that multitudes of the poorer classes in every part resorted to Dissenting chapels, because there was not room for them to sit or even to stand in their parish churches ; the government very properly remitted to the commissioners for building churches the duty payable to it on the building materials ; so that foreign timber, especially, might be procured at a much lower rate. But what did the Dissenters do ? *They* required, yes, the Southcottians, the Universalists, the Separatists, the Baptists, the Independents (but not the Wesleyans), that they also, when they should deem it either expedient or needful to build some little brick edifice close to the church of the national and State religion, should also be entitled to claim a remission of duty on all the building materials *they* might employ. This demand they called just and equitable ; but it has hitherto been deemed so preposterous, that though it is not abandoned by the Dissenters, it has not yet been granted. The Socinians, encouraged by their success on a former

occasion, now required that they should be relieved from the use of such part of the service of the Church of England, as appeared to amount to a belief in the Trinity. The clergy of the national Christian Protestant *Trinitarian* religion were required to read garbled extracts from the form of prayer ; and instead of at once seeking for relief by marriages by their own ministers, they insulted the Church of England by endeavouring to force her clergy, *nolens volens*, to read a form of prayer in which *the* fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion should be suppressed. This, however, was rejected. But did they remain quiet ? On the contrary ; year after year they laboured till they reduced the holy rite of marriage to a mere civil contract ; and sought an apology for their proceedings in the *Code Napoleon* of atheistical or popish France.

THE REPEAL OF THE TEST AND CORPORATION ACTS, in 1827, was *not* the work of the Irish or English Romanists. The Red Cross Street deputies of the Protestant Dissenters led the way ; the three denominations of Independents, Baptists, and Presbyterians had their representatives ; the United Associate Presbytery of London followed in the rear ; the Unitarian (read Socinian) association was clamorous in its demands for repeal ; the Board of Congregational Ministers backed O'Connell and Henry Grat-

tan : and the Protestant Society for the Protection of Religious Liberty published its resolutions of protest and complaint, all in furtherance of Papist demands and Papist influence. "*The Test Act Reporter*" opened its columns to all parties. The Church was maligned, history was unfaithfully recorded, Dissenters were made to believe that they were ill treated and oppressed, and although an annual bill of indemnity had for a long series of years been passed to exempt them from the operation of the acts in question, yet the united committees of Arians, Independents, Socinians, Baptists, Papists, and Infidels all concurred in the cry against the old church securities, and shouted, "*Raze it ! raze it ! even to the foundations thereof.*" The result of this union is known. The bill passed, the Dissenters triumphed, and a splendid banquet was given at the *Freemasons' Tavern* to the *Duke of Sussex*, to celebrate this new triumph of Dissent over the bulwarks of the old constitution, and the influence and power of the Church of England.

The repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts was intended to be preparatory to the triumph of Popery. Of this there can be no doubt. The Papists aided the Dissenters ; and the Dissenters pledged themselves in return, sooner or later, to aid them. Differing, as did both Dissenters and Papists in their reli-

gious opinions, they unanimously united in opposing the established religion of the country. It alone presented a formidable barrier against the encroachments of every schism, and it cannot therefore excite surprise that every schism united against it. That the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts was not essential either to the political or personal respect, influence, or happiness of the Dissenters, is unquestionable; and if our testimony be not sufficient, we can supply the evidence of one, who, at least in the opinions of the Dissenters themselves, is far beyond suspicion. What says Mr. Bennett, their historian? "The immediate practical effect of the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts was not considerable. Few Dissenters were, in consequence of the change of the law, admitted into corporations, or appointed to offices under government. The corporations, being self-elected, were in most places actuated by an exclusive spirit, and where they were more liberal, *Dissenters had previously been admitted, forming in some places the majority, and never having been called to submit to the test.* Those Dissenters who were most zealous in seeking the repeal of the disabilities were, in many instances, least inclined to make any use of the new bill for their own admission to place or power."

The Dissenters were clamorous, however, for the

Municipal Reform Bill, as it has been styled, which admitted their *reluctant*, but wealthier members, to the mayoralties and other posts of honour in cities and towns. Those who affected not only indifference, but even aversion (in consequence of their religious principles and habits), to corporation offices and festivities, now sought even to exclude Churchmen from their joint participation ; and whenever the union of all the Separatists, whether orthodox or heterodox, could secure the election either of a Baptist, Independent, or Socinian mayor, the votes of all the Separatists from the church were cheerfully and promptly bestowed.

In 1827, the Dissenters made a desperate effort to imitate the Established Church in the foundation of the London University. Again, the Duke of Sussex took the lead—again, all classes of orthodox and heterodox Dissenters united—and again the Separatists from the Church would have enjoyed an unmixed triumph, had not the sons of the Church, this time at least, done their duty, and founded the KING'S COLLEGE. But the establishment of “the *University College*,” in which the Prelate and the Dissenter sit together, and where several of the professors are Dissenting teachers, is the triumph of faction over the Protestant hereditary institutions of the country, and a confusion of names, sects, opi-

nions, and principles, injurious to the establishment, degrading to religion, and in opposition to the sound doctrines and convictions of wise and good men. But were the Dissenters satisfied with this new conquest? No. Dr. Hampden, at Oxford, and the Earl of Radnor, have espoused their cause, and the Dissenters claim admission, without test, without religious profession, and in the teeth of the fundamental laws and institutions, which, both at Oxford and Cambridge, regulate those abodes of learning, to an indiscriminate entry to such universities.

The period at length arrived, when, in 1829, the Dissenters gave the right hand of fellowship to the *Irish Papists*. The committees of the three denominations, and the Society for the Protection of Religious Liberty, petitioned for what was falsely denominated "*Catholic emancipation*"—and Baptists, Socinians, Independents, Arians, and Infidels, signed the same rolls of parchment calling upon Parliament to destroy for ever the Protestant constitution of the realms. This fatal measure was passed. This panacea for all the woes of "*old Ireland*" received the Royal assent; the victor on a thousand battle-fields was vanquished by petitions; and Sir Robert Peel, who had once fought for the cause of that church to which he had devoted his best and earliest years, lent the weight of his name and example to a measure which

was "to be at once healing and final." But both the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel have been deceived and disappointed. The Dissenters are more clamorous, and the Papists less satisfied in 1841 than in 1829, and still the cry against the Protestant Church is loud and reiterated, "*Raze it ! raze it ! even to the foundations.*" The Papist Ascendancy (or Catholic Emancipation) Bill was the commencement of a new era for the Church of England, and has been succeeded by a rapidity of measures, on the part of Dissenters and Papists, most painful to contemplate, and most injurious to the constitution both in Church and State. The reform of the Irish Church was demanded ! The Dissenting teachers and deacons, presbyters and congregations, were placed on a level with the authorized and State clergy of the national religion with respect to the non-payment of turnpike tolls on a Sunday. The little brick conventicle, in which Arianism and heresy were preached, was placed on the same footing as the established orthodox Church of England ; and the Dissenters, emboldened by past successes and past audacity, now declare, that " they are disposed to press their great principle, ' THE DUTY OF GOVERNMENT TO CONFINE ITS ATTENTION TO CIVIL AFFAIRS, AND LEAVE RELIGION TO THE MANAGEMENT OF VOLUNTARY CHURCHES. ' " This was the real, but

concealed, object of all their labours. During half a century they had worked hard to arrive at this result, and the Dissenters are now, with but few exceptions, unanimous in their endeavours.

The secession of some clergymen from the Church of England, under the title of "*The Plymouth Brethren*," must here be referred to. We question not the personal piety of many, at least, of these mistaken men, but we deplore that they have given occasion to the less educated and less pious enemies of the Church to rejoice. It is not by the multiplication of sects and denominations that a church is purified, reformed, or evangelized. John Wesley, George Whitefield, John Eyre, Rowland Hill, and many others we could name, would have gained indeed less worldly fame and renown for remaining closely attached to, and in connection with, the Church of England, but they would have rendered far more service to the cause of truth by seeking to improve the Church of which they were members, than by separating from it. We trust that the secession from the Church, under the title of "*The Plymouth Brethren*," is one not destined to be of long duration. No established church on earth is so truly Catholic in its principles and conduct as the Church of England. Its articles are large, scriptural, and evangelical. Its discipline is liberal, regular, and wholly free from arbitrary

decisions and uncertain rules. Its pulpits are free as the air we breathe; and so long as heresy shall not enter them, the parochial clergy can inculcate such views of truth as they believe in their consciences to be in accordance with the word of God. The cry raised against the "Ecclesiastical Courts" is both senseless and unprincipled—as their decisions are in accordance with the Protestant constitution of the country, with a perfect system of toleration to all Nonconformists, and with, at the same time, a wise and Christian spirit of protection towards the authorized clergy and the established Episcopal Church of these realms.

In the year 1832, the Dissenters assumed still higher ground, and began that series of attacks on the Church of England which have become daily more vehement, more irreligious, more personal, and more bitter.

THE BAPTIST BOARD, composed of men of very ordinary talents, and mixing wholly in the middling classes of society, having but two or three scholars in their denomination, and hardly any gentlemen, declared in 1832, by a set of resolutions, most industriously circulated, and most intemperately worded, "that they felt it *unjust* to be compelled by *law* to support a religion from which they dissented, convinced that the expense of supporting Christian

ministers, celebrating Christian worship, and extending the Redeemer's kingdom, should not be compulsory, but voluntary." This is a specimen of the unfair, as well as inaccurate, manner in which the questions of tithes and church rates are brought before the Dissenters by their spiritual and lay chiefs. For, if the views of the Baptist Board on the questions at issue were fairly stated by it, they would be put as follows :—

Resolved, 1st. That it is a matter of no importance to any community, whether any or what religion is professed by the chiefs, government, magistrates, or people.

2nd. That as religion is merely of a spiritual character, and has no relation to, or effect upon the constitutions or operations of human society, but is an individual feeling, and only can produce an individual operation, there ought to be no such governments as Christian governments; no such constitutions as Christian constitutions; and no such laws as Christian laws; since governments should confine their attention to civil affairs, and leave religion to the management of voluntary associations and individual caprice.

3rd. That though the Protestant Church of England was during a long period of time the only religion of the inhabitants of this country, and though

millions of saints have died in her faith, and been saved in her bosom ; that although large districts of the country are still only supplied with the regular means of public worship by her churches and clergy, and though two-thirds of the Protestant population are her members ; yet that it appears to this Board desirable to get rid of that Church altogether, and to leave it to the people of this country to decide whether they will be Christian or otherwise, and whether they will erect, frequent, or destroy and forsake both churches and chapels altogether.

4th. That it is *not* the duty of a government, professing to be a Christian government, to provide religious means and ordinances for the poor and uneducated ; that they should be left to themselves and to voluntary associations ; that, far from it being right and wise to supply every given district of the country with the regular, settled, and permanent means of Christian knowledge, it is desirable that the churches hitherto opened to all the parishioners without distinction should be shut, and allowed to fall into decay ; that the clergy should be deprived of all means of support ; and that the inhabitants of our moors, uplands, mountains, and marshes, should be left to their isolation, without houses of worship or parochial schools, trusting to the voluntary principle and the voluntary churches.

5th. That the Nonconformists of former periods were a spiritless and fawning set of men, who either knew not their rights, or, knowing, dared not defend them.

6th. That the Baptist Board, therefore, resolves to labour incessantly for the overthrow of the existing Church Establishment in this country; holds out its right hand of fellowship to Socinians, Arians, and Papists, as well as to Independents, Southcottians, and Universalists, to effect this object; and pledges itself never to cease to agitate until this overthrow shall be completed.

Now this is the *spirit* of the Baptist Board resolutions. No religion in the government—no religion in the state—no religion in the laws. All men are able to judge whether they will be of any, and of what religion; therefore let there be none, except such voluntary associations as may be found to be *profitable*, in large and overflowing cities.

The general measure of civil registration of births deaths, and marriages, was part and parcel of the proposed system of destruction of the English Church.

It was *not* that the Nonconformists of a century and a half, had felt themselves aggrieved by being married at their parish churches; much less that they had to complain of not being allowed to baptize or christen their infants or adult persons in their own

chapels or meeting-houses, or to inter them in their own burial-grounds. The Nonconformists had no right to, nor did they complain of these things. But it was necessary to the Dissenters to attack the Church. It was necessary to them to degrade the clergy, to deprive them of their official fees, to hand over a portion of those fees to the varied classes of multiform Separatist teachers, and to begin those inroads on the constitution of the Church of England, which they hope will terminate in its overthrow. If the object of the Dissenters had been simply to validate the registers of baptisms, christenings, and deaths, in their meeting-houses and burial-grounds, a bill might have been introduced for that single purpose. But this would not have answered their object. That object was to commence the disunion of the Church with the State; and it has been fearfully promoted by both houses of parliament, by the passing of the bill in question. The Dissenters wished the legislature to pledge itself. The Dissenters wished to drag both houses of parliament, the government, and the crown, into a legislative sanction of the *principle* of Dissent; and they have by obtaining this measure, most abundantly succeeded. We are not ignorant of the fact, that there are multitudes of Episcopalians who are of opinion, that if the connexion of the Church of England with

the State should be severed to-morrow, Episcopacy would not only be as virile as to-day, but even more vigorous. We will yield to none in the conviction we feel that the Church of England is an evangelical and scriptural Church, and that its spiritual Head will never forsake it; but the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, was not less the God of *the whole children of Israel*, than he was of each individual patriarch; and he is still the God of Christian governments and Christian communities, of Christian nations and Christian legislatures; and there ought to be a national, as well as a personal faith—a national, as well as an individual creed—a national, as well as a family altar.

In 1833, the United Committee of the Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists, resolved on exciting all classes of Separatists to petition for what they termed “*relief from their grievances!*” What were they?

1st. To be relieved from being obliged to marry at the parish churches of the country! This has been granted.

2nd. To be allowed to keep official registers of births, deaths, and marriages. This has been conceded.

3rd. To be exempt from church rates. This is ‘*the*’ question of February, 1841 — and O’Connell and Baines, Hume and Burnett, are the champions.

4th. To be allowed to bury Dissenters in the church burial-ground, not according to the rites of the Church, but of their own, various and multiplied as they are.

5th. To be permitted to enter the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge as avowed Dissenters, setting at defiance the charters and constitution of the whole of the colleges, and violating the institutions of their enlightened and benevolent founders.

So that, whilst the Dissenters claim to be exempt from church rates, they would have a churchyard kept up for themselves and their families, in which their teachers could exhort over the graves of defunct Separatists, against what John Angell James has styled in his Spring Hill Academy Prospectus, "*the inventions and corruptions of men in the positive institutions of Christianity*"—or in plainer Dissenting parlance, against the Church of England.

These Dissenting deputies forgot, for the moment indeed, the question of tithes ; but they did not forget it long. To no portion of church revenues are they more opposed—and though both the Old and the New Testament are replete with passages in favour of the tithe system, the united deputies are not less zealous in their opposition.

The successful efforts of the Dissenters in behalf of the anti-Episcopal *British and Foreign School Society*, have much encouraged both their preachers

and laymen. Here was a voluntary association for the instruction of the children of the poor on Dissenting principles. Why did not the Dissenters remain satisfied with the working of their own voluntary principle? With their professed aversion to State interference in all matters of religion and education, how came it to pass that they sought from the *State*, a grant in favour of Dissenting schools and Dissenting education? But though the British and Foreign School Society now enjoys the support and patronage of the civil government of this country, notwithstanding that institution is anti-Episcopal in its character and proceedings; though the crown, state, houses of parliament, and constitution, are Episcopal—yet, are the Dissenters satisfied? No. Listen to their own declarations on this subject of education, as expressed in the language of their own able and eloquent historian.

“A more comprehensive system of national education is, however, still a desideratum, which is beginning to attract its due share of public attention. It is encompassed with difficulties, and no plan which has yet been proposed is free from objections. HAPPILY FOR THE NATION AND THE CHURCH OF GOD, THERE IS LITTLE REASON TO FEAR THAT THE INTOLERANT SYSTEM OF COMMITTING EDUCATION TO THE CARE OF THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH, AND COMPEL-

LING THE CHILDREN OF THE POOR TO SUBMIT TO THE INCULCATION OF RELIGION ACCORDING TO THE VIEWS OF ONE SECT, IS NOT LIKELY TO BE ENDURED BY THE PEOPLE, OR DECREED BY THE STATE."

What then is this terrible religion of the Established Church, which the children of the poor *ought not to submit to*, and the inculcation of which the people are not likely to *endure*, or the State to *decree*? It is high time to interrogate these champions of a thousand creeds, what are the great heresies of the *religion* of the Church of England? Does the Church of England teach Atheism, Deism, Paganism, Mahometanism, or Infidelity? Does the Church of England proclaim the great Christian facts of one God, one Saviour, one Holy Spirit, a Triune and an Eternal Godhead? Does the Church of England teach the divinity of our Saviour, His blessed atonement, His glorious resurrection, His ascension into heaven, His mediatorial office, a future judgment, an eternal state of happiness for the children of God, and of condemnation for the finally impenitent? Does the Church of England proclaim the ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF GOD'S WORD, the sacraments instituted by our Saviour, and the necessity for faith to save, and for works as an evidence of justification? Does not the sixth article of the religion of the Church of England proclaim the first of all verities, that—

“Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation : so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation ;” and does it not follow that the religion so proclaimed by the Church of England, is the *religion of the Bible* ?

Does not the Church of England teach the doctrines of original sin, of justification by faith, of the necessity for holiness, of the value and importance of the sacraments, and of the eternal love of God to his Church and people ? Does not the Church of England condemn Papistical errors, refute the heresy of purgatory, authorize the marriages of the clergy, and reduce to their just value all *Church traditions*, declaring that “every particular or national church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish, ceremonies or rites of the Church ordained only by man’s authority, so that all things be done to edifying ?” Does not the Church of England render respect to the civil magistrates, support the influence of the crown, defend the right of each subject to his own property, and discourage superfluous oaths and unnecessary tests ? Does not the Church of England support all charitable associations, hospitals, dispensaries, lunatic asylums, poor houses, bible societies,

missionary institutions, and whatsoever tendeth to ameliorate the physical and moral condition of fallen man? Then what means this exulting language, this triumphant tone of the historian of the Dissenters of the present day, when he rejoices that this religion of the Church of England, neither the people nor the State will endure to be inculcated amongst the children of the poor? The discipline of the Church, the revenues of the clergy, and even the Episcopacy of the Establishment, do not affect these fundamental doctrines, precepts, and conduct, of the Church; so then, why this exclamation, that “*Happily* for the nation and the Church of God!” the clergy of the National Episcopal Church are not likely to be entrusted with the spiritual instruction of the poor, the weak, and the ignorant? It is surely time that the chiefs of the Dissenters should define their *spiritual* objections to the *spiritual* system of the Church of England. It is time that the controversy should not always be reduced to the narrow shopkeeping limits of pounds, shillings, and pence; but that those who profess to care for the *souls* of the population, and above all, of the rising generation, should descend into particulars, and should specify the heresies of the Church of England the doctrines to which Trinitarian Dissenters object, and the dangers which the souls of young Episcopals will run, if they remain attached to the religion

of their ancestors. It is a fact which cannot be either disputed or palliated, that modern Dissenterism speaks with more respect, love, brotherly kindness, and charity of Popery, Papism, and the Romish Priests, than it does of Episcopacy, the Church of England, and her authorized, devoted, and pious clergy. It is a fact, that the Dissenters of 1841 receive at their meetings and on their platforms the Romish agitator, Mr. O'Connell, with far more enthusiasm and respect, than they would a bishop of the Church of England.

In 1834, the ABOLITION OF THE CHURCH RATES was vehemently demanded by the united Dissenters. Because the Papists in Ireland had been relieved from the Protestant Church "cess," Protestant Dissenters declared that it would be impossible to collect church rates in England. In vain did Lord Althorp seek to pacify them by a concession he ought not to have proposed — *viz.* to repair the churches out of the public taxes. This they would not accept; and a commission was appointed to seek to raise the prices of church lands, and to concede to all who may think fit to declare they are separatists from the Church, the privilege of not paying taxes. The names of *Child*, *Burder*, and *Baines*, are the most prominent of those who have been excited by a fierce and party spirit to oppose the payment of rates for

maintaining in decency and order that Church of which it has been written,

Half screened by its trees, in the Sabbath's calm smile,

The Church of our Fathers, how meekly it stands !

Oh villagers, gaze on the old hallowed pile—

It was dear to their hearts, it was raised by their hands.

Who loves not the place where they worshipped their God ?

Who loves not the ground where their ashes repose ?

Dear even the daisy that blooms on the sod,

For dear is the dust out of which it arose !

Then say, shall the Temple our forefathers built,

Which the storms of long ages have battered in vain,

Abandoned by us from supineness or guilt,

Oh say, shall it fall by the rash and profane ?

No ! perish the impious hand that would take

One shred from its altar, one stone from its towers !

The pure blood of Martyrs hath flowed for its sake,

And its fall—if it fall—shall be reddened with ours !

THE CHURCH RATE ABOLITION SOCIETY has got up recently a meeting at Leicester. The Dissenting Mr. Baines was the hero of the day, and Daniel O'Connell pledged himself that Ireland, ever ready at his beck and call for agitation, should petition by tens of thousands when called for, against the church rates. No wonder he promised petitions, since his names are all stereotyped. Poor Papist Paddy has given him a blank power of attorney, and he fills it up as it suits either his pocket or his passions.

The Dissenters have not rested here. They opposed, with success, the pious plan of the Bishop of London for erecting *vestry rooms*, in which parish meetings might be held for secular purposes, and thus protect the Churches of God from quarrels, brawls, and even riots. This opposition was natural. The national churches had no charms, no sacredness for them; and they only looked at the pecuniary portion of the measure. In like manner, they successfully opposed a grant to the Church of Scotland to build additional churches. They counted seats and population with the eyes of Dissenters—and as in the whole of the churches, chapels, and meeting-houses they could pack in rows, at twelve inches for each sitting, that portion of the inhabitants whom *they* represented as disposed to attend divine worship, they shouted with rapture that there were sittings and churches enough, and convinced a willingly convinced government that the grant was unnecessary.

The connexion of the State with the Church, is, however, the great source of opposition and discontent to the Dissenters of 1841. “THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE,” says their historian, “*has become their favourite watchword*.....Dissenters have studied to convince their countrymen that the government should protect ALL sects, and establish none; but

leave religion to the voluntary endowment of its own disciples." So said French atheists, German neologists, and infidel philosophers. "THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE," says the same Author, "is not of so modern a date as its enemies would insinuate. It had long been *cherished in secret* by men who had outstripped their contemporaries ; but circumstances have recently called it out to view, and given it a bold prominence. That it should be viewed with horror by those who had been accustomed to lean upon the State for support, was natural ; for they were well aware that State endowments and compulsory tithes had extinguished the generosity of Christian principle, which in purer times more than sufficed for the support of the Church of Christ..... THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE has forced itself upon public notice ; and those who would willingly have left it to expire in oblivion, have been compelled to promote its triumphs by their censure ; while others, more favourably disposed, acknowledge that if the connexion of the State with the Church did not already exist, it ought not to be introduced."

This is the triumphant language of Dissenting chiefs, supported, or at least encouraged, by a government wholly indifferent to religious creeds, and to the progress of Protestant and Evangelical truth. But the Dissenters do not stop here. Whilst

they record their triumphs, they signalize their defeats—and in plaintive notes they complain of “the extension of the State Church with the creation of new bishops in our colonies, especially in the East Indies; the erection of new churches at the public expense; the consequent increase of a State clergy; the failure of the attempt to remove the bishops from the House of Lords; and the long delay of relief from church rates.” The impatient, fretful, and dogmatic leaders of the Dissenters, fearful of a reaction in public opinion, wish to push on the conflict, and fight the battle so long preparing for the overthrow of the Church.

“The absolute liberty of the United States of America,” is another of the watchwords of Protestant Dissenters. “We have been told by high authorities,” says James Bennett, “that it is our own fault if we do not obtain all that we can reasonably ask.” It would be at once important and interesting to be informed who are these “*high authorities*” who have thus recommended “Dissenting agitation.” Are they not the late Lord Holland, Lord John Russell, the present Earl Spencer, Daniel O’Connell, and Joseph Hume? Or are these “*high authorities*” the late students of the Hackney, Homerton, and Highbury Seminaries, sons of shopkeepers and tradesmen, but now the Dissenting Pastors at Lon-

don, Birmingham, and Manchester? On this subject the historian of the Dissenters is silent—but we are disposed to believe that they are composed of an union of all.

But though silent as to the *names* of the political excitors to revolt against the established religion, and the authorized clergy of the country, he is far from being so with reference to the objects proposed to be sought for and obtained. “We should ask,” he says, “*that our Government would retreat within its own proper sphere, the protection of the peace of society and the equal RIGHTS of all, leaving religion where Christ left it, to the government and protection of the Most High.*” Without Apostles, we suppose; without the power of working miracles, we suppose; without the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, we suppose. Oh yes! according to this Dissenting writer, Christianity was left without protection, direction, guidance, or support; without Bishops, without an authorized clergy, an established priesthood, regular sacraments, and forms of church government, discipline, and worship. No—this was not the case. It was *no voluntary principle* which dictated the command, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature;” not as the voluntary principle would do, to dense cities, large towns, and crowded populations, where

the receipts from the pew-rents would pay most largely, and remunerate most handsomely, a Hackney or a Homerton student; but to rural populations, scattered flocks, dispersed inhabitants on moors, in marshes, on bleak and barren hills, on high and uncultivated mountains, where still, blessed be God, the church bell rings with the same regularity as in London or Liverpool, and where to congregations of 40, 50, or 60 souls, the prayers of our Holy Church are read with matchless order and attention, and the truths of the everlasting Gospel are proclaimed with Evangelical fervour and unction. Oh! what would these populations do, if they were left to the tender mercies of the *voluntary principle*? As we have ploughed up the country in the carriages of the railways which now conduct us through the very heart of the rural districts, in vain have we sought for the Independent, Baptist, Arian, Socinian, Southcottian, or Universalist chapels. They are not to be found. At the “*terminus*,” indeed, where the wealthy and crowded inhabitants, divided into numberless districts and communions, attend large square-built brick chapels and sometimes fill them to the brim, the Dissenting teacher finds “*an opening*” of a very providential character, and a salary on a very profitable scale. But take him to the moors—propose to him a VOLUNTARY triumph in Romney Marshes or on the Hills of

Derbyshire, and he will decline the proffered application of his own principle. Dissenterism is made for a choosing, a captious, a bustling, population; but the Church of England is adapted to all ranks and classes, and provides for the small and rural, scattered and weak, as well as for the high and lofty, wealthy and powerful.

“No modification of an evil so gross, so essentially unjust, as the union between the Church and the State,” continues the Dissenters’ historian and apologist, “ought to satisfy those who are duly concerned for their country’s welfare, and the paramount interests of the Christian faith.” And again — ‘*Dissenters ought to ask, temperately and respectfully, indeed, but firmly and incessantly, for the entire dissolution of the unhallowed, unauthorized, and pernicious Alliance.*’ And again—“The difficulties of the task should dictate to us patience—but we deny that we should for one moment descend from our highest claims, or stop, even to take breath, in our pursuit.” There can be no mistake here. The Church is warned in no doubtful or obscure language; and if it shall submit, without a contest to the death, it will indeed merit the opprobrium now unjustly heaped on it by its opponents.

The objects proposed to be obtained by the United Dissenters, and to be pressed for “*without even taking breath, in their pursuit,*” are :—

1st. The separation of the Church from the State.
2nd. The exclusion of the bishops from seats in the House of Lords.

3rd. The abolition of tithes.

4th. The suppression of church rates.

5th. The opening of churchyards to the prayers, addresses, and sermons, of Dissenting teachers of all sects and denominations, over the graves of their varied inmates. So that the Arian is to laud in the parish churchyard the unbeliever in the Holy Spirit; the atheistical professor to eulogize the bold philosophy of his student or disciple; the Freethinker to hold up to imitation the rejector of all creeds and all religious opinions; the Socinian to preach to the assembled parishioners, at the very external wall of the altar, the absurdity and folly of the Atonement; the Southcottian to proclaim the virtues of his defunct Joanna; the Universalist to rail at the notion of a future place of punishment; and, finally, the Independent and the Baptist to deal in their "*quolibets*" and innuendoes against that Church of England beneath whose rugged elms, those yew trees' shade, the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

6th. The creation of a *national* system of education, from which, forsooth, the *National* Religion, *National* Church, and *National* Clergy are to be excluded.

And 7th, the remission of the duty payable to government on all foreign timber used in the erection of any Dissenting or sectarian meeting-house.

But who is it that calls for these monstrous concessions? Who is it that makes these unparalleled claims?

The committee of deputies of the three denominations of Presbyterian, Independent, and Baptist Dissenters; deputations from the general body of Dissenting ministers; the Protestant Society; the United Associate Presbytery; the Congregational Magazine; the Church-rate Abolitionist Society; the Patriot; and the Voluntary.

Do the Wesleyan Methodists join in these demands? Unquestionably not; and yet, without the Wesleyans be added to the numbers of the Separatists from the Church, their statistics are contemptible. For whilst the number of the churches and chapels of the Church of England are 12,000, those of the Independents, Baptists, Quakers, Presbyterians, and Socinians are only 3,800, and the Wesleyan Methodists alone are 3,500: the Wesleyans being irregular churchmen, and opposed to these schemes of aggression, attack, agitation, and violence. The Church of England and the Wesleyan Methodists have then 15,500 churches and chapels, whilst the United Dissenters do not amount to one-fourth of

the number. We have *not* included the Calvinistic Methodists in this estimate of the Dissenting forces, because we believe *them* also to be averse to agitation against the Church. We are aware that all those Dissenters and Separatists who oppose with vehemence and bitterness the Church of England, have endeavoured to mystify the public, the Church, and the government, as to their statistics. But this attempt cannot be long successful. The numbers of churches and chapels are not the only criteria: for the dimensions of those places of worship must be taken into account. Who can dispute that the cathedrals, parish churches, chapels of ease, and district churches, are four times, three times, and twice larger, than Independent, Baptist, and Socinian meeting-houses? And who will deny that the Wesleyan chapels are very far more commodious (on the average) than are Dissenting places of worship? We may affirm, then, with confidence, that the Episcopalian churches and chapels of England, and the Wesleyan chapels, contain together sittings for at least ten times a greater number of individuals than could be seated in the united meeting-houses of Independents, Baptists, Presbyterians, and Socinians. We know that we are very far below the estimate of Church and Wesleyan accommodation, and of Church and Wesleyan members and hearers, when

we say, that, as compared with Dissenters, they are, in bulk and numbers, as ten to one. These United Dissenters seek indeed to augment *their* lists and their calculations, by adding the Wesleyans to their numbers; but we have already exposed this fallacy, as it will likewise be found to be referred to in the following pages of "MY LIFE."

But though the United Dissenters have vastly exaggerated their physical forces, they have not over-rated their desperate resolution, their decided animosity, their inveterate hate, their determined character, and their ardent desire to level to the ground that Church, which has tolerated them with so much charity and forgiveness, prayed for them with so much devotion and sincerity, and which still desires, next to the salvation of the souls of men, to see them gathered into one flock, and united to the Episcopal and Evangelical Church of these Protestant realms. The United Dissenters have resolved to attempt to realize in their conduct the fable of the bundle of sticks. They have, however, some awkward and very prickly faggots among them. The Papists give them some trouble, and the Socinians some uneasiness. Pious Dissenters cannot understand the want of harmony which exists between the censures cast on the Socinians from the pulpit, and the harmony and friendship at the Congregational Library, or at

the Poultry Tavern. Some of those who do not allow their enmity to the Church to get the better of their love of the word of God, and their desire for the salvation of the souls of their fellow-men, do not hesitate to disapprove of the restless, political, warring, agitating character of *modern* Dissenterism ;— but they are held up to reproach, under the title of “ *timid Dissenters*,” or “ *half Churchmen* ;” whilst such men as Mr. Thomas Duncombe, the member for Finsbury, Mr. Roebuck, the ex-member for Bath, and Mr. Joseph Hume, the protégé of Daniel O’Connell, as well as Daniel himself, are put forward as suitable representatives of even pious and Christian Dissenters !

We think we may claim for ourselves as an indisputable fact, that we have proved our opening proposition, that “ *the attitude of Dissenters in Great Britain and Ireland in 1841, is that of hostility to the Church of England.*” And we have been anxious to do so, because we should not have published “ *MY LIFE*,” nor have written this introduction, had not, in our opinion, the moment arrived, when silence would have been a dereliction of duty, and when, with the intimate knowledge we possess of the Dissenting tactics and policy of the last half-century, and of the year in which we are now writing, we should have hesitated to make an attempt at least to excite the

Throne, the parliament, the government, the magistrates, the clergy, and the laity of the Established Church to do their duty. Are we really Churchmen? Do we really believe that it is essential to the moral and religious character of the country that the government, the crown, the parliament, the laws, should not be atheistical, latitudinarian, or indifferent on religious principles? Are we satisfied that the Church of England is not only a Church recognized by the constitution and laws of the country, but that it is a Bible Church, an Orthodox Church, an Evangelical Church? Do we not know that of all the Churches in Christendom, whether Papist, Greek, Lutheran, Calvinist, or Reformed, it is the most tolerant of all? Are we not satisfied that the Church of England has, by the blessing of the Holy Spirit on its constitution, discipline, articles, and form of worship, been the means of preserving to the British dominions a pure faith, a zealous priesthood, an inimitable form of prayer, and a burning and holy altar? As we cast our eyes around us in every direction, and behold the state of religion in Europe and America, in countries where no national Protestant churches exist, or in some where they are likewise established, do we not, as enlightened and sincere Christians, bless God with all our hearts that we are members of the Church of England? If we

visit the seminaries, the chapels, the meeting-houses, the congregational associations, the committee meetings of the Dissenters of 1841, can we not place our hands on our hearts and say, "Thank God we are Episcopalians?" If there be any who shall rise without such emotions after the perusal of "MY LIFE," which is a fair, full, candid, honest epitome of the difficulties, contradictions, perversities, and evils of Dissenterism, we shall for that man have laboured in vain. But multitudes need no such perusal: they are convinced already. To them, then, we urge, "Do your duty!" It is not enough, we say to our archbishops, bishops, deans, prebendaries, canons, and parochial and other clergy, in the times in which we live, to bless God for a pure faith, a Holy Church, and a zealous priesthood. It is not enough to read with regularity and piety the prayers of the Church, to preach with fervour and unction the word of life, to dispense the sacraments with zeal and faith, to visit the sick with attention and prayerfulness, to give special care to the rising generation, and to their religious instruction, to become acquainted with the spiritual and temporal wants of all your flocks, and to take the lead in all efforts to spread the Gospel of our Saviour both at home and abroad. You, the Clergy of our Church, in 1841, must do far more than all this.

You must defend her, and all her smaller as well as larger institutions, against the encroachments of Papists, Popish doctrines, Dissenting opposition, Socinian error, and infidel imposture. You must be zealous "*in season and out of season,*" for the Church. You must teach your flocks at home and in the church, in the schools and in the vestries, not merely what is truth, but also what is error. You must show them what IS Dissenterism, not to excite them to animosity against their fellow parishioners, but to supply them with answers to the shallow but deceptive objections of the enemies of the Establishment. If William Thorn will circulate by thousands in your parishes his obnoxious tracts against the Church of England, you, though in a better spirit, must point out clearly and constantly to what errors, dangers, and sorrows of a spiritual nature, the multiform character of modern Dissenterism must inevitably lead. Do the enemies of the Church form associations to obtain "the abolition of tithes?"—you must rally round you the lay and zealous members of your Churches to defend them. Do the Dissenters establish "Church-rate Abolition Societies?"—you must found counter associations and obtain counter petitions. Do the Dissenters petition by thousands for the exclusion of the Bishops from their seats in the House of Peers?—you must rally round the Conser-

vative House of Lords, and protest against their removal. Do the Dissenters demand the separation of the Church from the State?—you must obtain, as you can do, ten times the number of petitions in its favour; and must show, as you can do, how beneficial that union has been to the interests of morality, the preservation of the Protestant religion, and the spread of saving truth. Do the Dissenters insolently ask that the churchyards of our ancestors, who bled and died for their most holy faith, shall be desecrated by the varied speeches and discourses of every description of Separatist teacher, from the Southcottian to the Irvingite, and from the Socinian to the Ranter, who may claim the “right” of pronouncing an eulogium on his defunct disciple?—Rouse your populations to a man against such Vandalism as this, and fill both houses of parliament with the petitions of an insulted and indignant people. And, finally, do the Dissenting Teachers seek to tear from you, or to divide with you, on equal numerical terms, forsooth, the religious education of the youth of your parishes?—Publish your statistics, approach the legislature with firmness and decision, back your own representations by the addresses and petitions of the bulk of your parishes, and convince, as you can do, the crown, the government, and the parliament, as well as the people, that you, the authorized and Epis-

copalian clergy, are the proper directors of the national religious education of this Protestant kingdom. But there is no time to be lost. Every year, as we have shown you, new aggressions are made, new conquests effected, new attacks prepared by the United Dissenters—and whilst one association is engaged in opposing tithes, another is attacking church rates, a third a truly national system of education, a fourth the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Church : and all agree in demanding the separation of the Church from the State.

There *was* a time when Christianity ever stood on the defensive, in reply to the multitudinous attacks which were made on her evidences and Scriptures. At length the position was changed. Infidelity was asked for its proofs. Deism was put on its trial. Deistical writers were arraigned at the bar of public opinion, enlightened reason, and Scriptural truth. Those who had always led on the attack against Christianity, were now required to prove the truth of *their* systems. And who does not know the result ? Voltaire, Rousseau, D'Alembert, Paine, and all the other pestilential objectors of the last and the present centuries, were silenced.

That which was done for Christianity, must be accomplished for the Church of England. She has stood too long on the *defensive*. She has defended

herself with patience, meekness, reason, truth, and piety; but her opponents, with their multitudinous creeds and strange and disproportioned systems, are dissatisfied, violent—and proclaim a war of extermination. It is time, then, that that war should be carried into the enemy's country. It is time that modern Dissenterism should be better understood and fully exposed. It is time that the eyes of the population of this land should be opened by tracts, newspapers, volumes, treatises, and speeches, to the errors, absurdities, contradictions, and dangers of Dissenterism; and it is with this view that “MY LIFE” has been written.

Nor should the laity of our Church remain indifferent or lifeless spectators of the innovations or of the attacks which are being made. Their hereditary titles, their fortunes, their station, their rank, their family influence and family happiness, the security of all that is most dear to them, their moral force and their religious character, they almost exclusively owe, under God, to the Protestant religion and Protestant Church now vilified, denounced, and attacked by the United Dissenters. The Church Laity exercise in the counties a vast and well-deserved influence. Let them more than ever exert it in favour of that Church. If the Dissenters will imitate the quiet, peaceful, and pious Nonconformists of former times, let them be treated

with generosity, affability, kindness, and affection. But if Dissenters will continue to follow out their present schemes for the overthrow of the national religion, there must be such a "RALLY FOR THE CHURCH" on the part of the nobility, gentry, and yeomanry of England, as shall convince the enemies of the Establishment that there is a limit to forbearance, and that such limit is *the boundary line between liberty and slavery*. Episcopalians cannot bow their consciences or their faith to that Dissenterism, which would ride rough-shod through the churches of the land.

At the risk of being "*sneered at*" for our "*impertinence*," or "*ridiculed*" for our seeming "*conceit*," we shall venture also to address a few words to our Dissenting fellow subjects. We say to them, when your forefathers had griefs to redress, or at least what they believed in their consciences to be so, they never forgot the respect due to a Church which produced a Latimer and a Ridley, a Hooker and a Bishop Hall, a Tillotson and a Horne. They neither cringed to the mitre, nor insulted it. They did not ridicule a Church which had been instrumental, in the hands of the Holy Spirit, in perpetuating pure doctrine and a godly faith in very sad and dangerous times ; nor declare, with one of the chiefs of modern Dissenterism, "*that the Church had lost more*

souls than it had saved." The controversies of former times were conducted by gentlemen, as well as Christians, and by scholars as well as saints. The change which has taken place among you, Dissenting fellow subjects, is neither honourable to your convictions, your churches, your seminaries, or your controversialists. What would such men as Watts, Doddridge, Howe, or Baxter, have said to Dissenting clubs assembling at taverns, with Papists and Free-thinking members of the House of Commons to meet them, to take measures for preventing, if possible, the needful reparation of the national churches? If in another and a blessed state such facts could reach them, they would be ready to descend from their happiness and their glory, to entreat you to abandon your present worldly, carnal, and intemperate opposition.

What can you hope to obtain from such collisions but strife, heart-burnings, retaliation, opposition for opposition, censure for censure, exposure, obloquy, contumely, and reproach? Can you believe that the nobility, clergy, gentry, yeomanry, country gentlemen, old families, landed proprietors, and even wealthy and influential manufacturers, to say nothing of the *largest* portion of the middling classes, and nine-tenths of the poor, will all quietly submit to be scolded, frightened, and ridiculed out of their ancient,

venerable, orthodox, and Evangelical Church? Do you imagine that all the piety of the country, we mean that piety which is of no doubtful interpretation, is confined to the square-built meeting-houses which you are accustomed to frequent? Do you think that in those venerable structures, in which the old Nonconformist divines delighted to preach before the Act of Uniformity, all is cold, lifeless, graceless, and mere formal worship? You cannot be so ignorant as this. Do you believe, in your consciences, that the regular, consistent, pious, converted, and evangelical frequenters of our churches, will abandon but with their lives those hallowed spots where God has visited them with his salvation, and renewed them with his Spirit? If such be your hopes, you are mistaken; for, believe us, the Church will not abdicate. Or do you hope that the Wesleyan Methodists will join your ranks, assist in your work of destruction, and seek to profit from the confusion and anarchy your leaders hope to introduce? If so — you are again much mistaken. Consult Dr. Bunting, consult Mr. Beecham, consult Dr. Sandwith, Dr. Alder, Mr. Jackson, and the other leaders of the Wesleyan body — and they will tell you that never since the death of John Wesley, was their body less disposed than at present to a junction with yourselves. But why do we tell you this? You know it. You com-

plain twice a week of their Episcopalian tendencies, in your organ "*The Patriot*." —You have no fellowship with them, and no love for them; and in proportion as you advance in your violence and hatred to the Church, in the same proportion will the Wesleyans retreat from your societies, discard your views, and proclaim their total independence of all your theories and projects. Or do you rely on political movements—on the progress of democracy—on the triumph of clamour, the ballot, mob domination, and club law, to secure the accomplishment of your wishes, and the realization of your hopes? If this be the case, again you will be confounded—for nine-tenths of the population of the country would on such grounds be opposed, both physically and morally, to your projects. We ask you then, what do you hope to effect? You may bring about civil war—but you will be exterminated in the conflict. You may so disturb the country by your vehemence, as to unsettle all men's minds, and derange all the efforts of Bible, Tract, School, and Missionary Societies. You may substitute the sword of man for the word of God; and the Christian may weep for years over both churches, chapels, and meeting-houses, neglected and deserted. But this will not be the end. The people of Great Britain will return to their clergy, their churches, their altars, their sacraments,

their prayer books, their evangelical creeds, hereditary pulpits, and sacred psalmody.

The people of Great Britain are essentially religious, and they will not be satisfied to entrust their children's souls and those of their descendants, to the voluntary conceits, prejudices, and efforts, directions, and controul of *voluntary churches* destitute of fixed principles, as well as of a known, tried, and established faith. To you, then, the nominal, but not the real descendants either in principles or conduct of the old Nonconformists—we say, pause before you commence the new series of struggles to which your impetuous and un-spiritual leaders would endeavour to pledge you. You cannot ask the blessing of God on the plans they have announced; you cannot believe that their projects will be sanctified by the outpourings of the Holy Spirit. There is nothing of *spirituality* of character or feeling in the motives or plans of the United Deputies of Papists, Infidels, and Dissenters at the period at which we write. You have all the liberty your ancestors ever hoped to obtain;—all the toleration they ever sought to procure;—far more than all the privileges they desired to possess:—and every one of you can sit under his own vine and fig-tree, none daring to make you afraid. Pause, then, before you commence that conflict, the consequences of which must be at once

injurious to your own spiritual condition, as well as retardatory to the Gospel you profess to love.

Before we terminate this prolonged, but necessary Introduction to "MY LIFE, BY AN EX-DISSENTER," it is important to ourselves and others that we should avow our attachment to the fundamental doctrines of our holy and beloved Church. We are no speculators in matters of religion—no general, but uncertain believers in the doctrines of the cross. We are convinced of the fall of man, of the necessity of regeneration, of the blessed and glorious doctrines of justification by faith, free grace, and the atonement; of the resurrection of our bodies, a final judgment, the eternal separation of the righteous from the wicked, and of a Heaven and Hell. If we thought that the publication of "MY LIFE" would be injurious to the progress, in any one heart, of the reign of grace, we would instantly commit it to the flames. But, satisfied as we are, that not merely our own churches, but the cause of the Gospel in all churches, is endangered by the present attitude of hostility of the United Dissenters to the Church of England, we commend our work to the blessing of our Heavenly Father, and await its publication and circulation not indeed without Christian anxiety, but at least with Christian satisfaction, and Christian confidence.

in order to give a full and complete account of the
 history of the Church in this country, it is necessary
 to go back to the beginning of the Christian era, and
 to follow the progress of the Gospel from its first
 introduction to the present day. This is the object
 of the present work, and it is hoped that it will
 be found interesting and useful to all who are
 interested in the history of the Church in this
 country. The work is divided into three parts, the
 first of which contains a general history of the
 Church in this country, from its first introduction
 to the present day. The second part contains a
 detailed history of the Church in this country, from
 its first introduction to the present day. The third
 part contains a detailed history of the Church in
 this country, from its first introduction to the
 present day. It is hoped that this work will be
 found interesting and useful to all who are
 interested in the history of the Church in this
 country.

MY LIFE.

PART I.

FAMILY ANNALS AND EARLIEST YEARS OF A MODERN DISSENTER.

I HAD the happiness to draw my first breath on the Protestant shores of dear old England. My father resided in a populous town in the county of Wiltshire, and belonged to the Independent congregation "meeting for divine worship" under the pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Hawthorne. My mother, though belonging to a Baptist family, was no advocate for close communion, i. e. she just believed it possible for an individual to be a Christian, and therefore entitled to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, who had *not* been baptized by *immersion*. Her eldest brother entertained very different opinions, regarded Robert Hall as a

mistaken and even dangerous teacher, and joined the exclusive party in that denomination, defended, as it subsequently has been, by Mr. Fuller, of Kettering, and by Mr. Kinghorn, of Norwich, which maintains that Baptists and Pædobaptists should never meet at the same altar. Convinced that his sister, by her continuance in her more tolerant principles, would injure her own religious state, and set the example for desertion from the camp of Close Communionists, my maternal uncle, about the period of my birth, after addressing a long, violent, and denunciatory letter to his sister, refused ever after to enter my father's house, and died, at a distance of twenty years, rejoicing that he had remained faithful to his bigotry and his exclusiveness, and had not countenanced the fearful apostacy of his less illiberal sister. As the hour approached when my maternal uncle was to be summoned from the divisions and dissensions of time, to the bar of that Saviour from whose table he sought to exclude all who were not baptized by *immersion*, my mother, apprized of his state, applied for an interview. After twenty years' cessation of all intercourse, either verbal or written, such a meeting, at such a moment,

appeared to me to be solemn, if not awful. The grey light of an autumnal evening conducted myself and my mother to the door, and we soon found ourselves in the chamber of death. That impress which death alone can make, had stamped the features of my by no means aged uncle. A faithful servant of the same communion as himself, watched her master's last hours, and the flickering of the fire-light on an old square bedstead with a dark moreen furniture, and on the patchwork counterpane of former generations, was calculated to produce an effect on the minds of both my mother and myself. On a small table between the fire and his couch lay his Bible, Rippon's Hymns, and some recent pamphlets on the open communion question. But he was a strict Communionist to the last. Informed of the presence of my mother in his sick room, he gave no other sign of consciousness than that of raising himself in his bed, and asking in broken but feeble accents of the faithful Charlotte, "*Has she read Fuller's Admission of Unbaptized Persons to the Lord's Supper?*" He was informed in the affirmative. The dying man rejoined, "*and Kinghorn's Plea for Primitive Communion ; and Baptism a Term of Com-*

munion?” My mother, scarcely able to suppress her emotions, cried aloud, “YES, YES—dear brother, I have read them all—but let us now be reconciled. These subjects may divide us in time, but they will not do so in eternity.” “They will, they will!” exclaimed my uncle, with a deeply anxious and agitated look, “they will, they will;” and he sunk back upon his pillow wholly exhausted. It was his last effort, as his last word. No brotherly recognition passed from his eye to hers, who had been fed at the same breast, dandled on the same knees, and taught to repeat the same prayer, “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;” and no parting kiss, blessing, or prayer were heard from the strict Communionist. He died in less than an hour afterwards: none were invited to his funeral who had not been baptized by *immersion*, and who were not members of Mr. Mountain’s Baptist secession. He left his fortune to “*the cause*,” i. e. to the strict Communionists, and his sister’s children were not even named in his will or codicils.

My father was a manufacturer, not very wealthy, but in good circumstances. He had inherited from his father a severe disposition, a

broad-cloth business, and an adequate capital. My paternal grandfather had been educated an Episcopalian, and, during a considerable period of his life, had attended with regularity the faithful and zealous preaching of the Rev. Mr. Seymour, who was not less distinguished for his learning than his piety, and for his gentlemanly manners than for his deep research. As a minister of the gospel, he was faithful and affectionate; as the pastor of the parish, he was incessantly occupied in doing good, and many a weary couch and dying pillow were solaced by his sympathy, and smoothed by his benevolence. But my grandfather was ambitious for the post of *Churchwarden*, and Mr. Seymour was not favourable to his nomination. The dear old Rector believed that neither my grandfather's temper nor occupations, neither his fortune nor his education, rendered him a desirable person, whilst another candidate appeared to unite in his character all the necessary requisites.

My grandfather now resolved on quitting the Church for ever; on becoming a Dissenter; on seeking to gratify his love of power where his fortune would secure its toleration; and on adding his name, unhappily, to those who allow

personal pique to get the better of principle and duty. My grandmother, a plain country gentlewoman, easily acquiesced in the decision of her husband, especially as her pride, as a member of the Hawkins's family, was wounded, by the rejection of my grandfather from the sought for post of churchwarden. My grandfather made known his intentions very extensively in his neighbourhood; but, not being well instructed in even the rudiments of dissent, he was unable to answer the question very frequently put to him, by those whom he informed of his plans—"But to what dissenting denomination do you propose to belong?" Still the general fact was known, in a very few days, to all the separatist teachers, of every name and denomination, seven miles round; and the Independent, Baptist (of both open and strict communion), Presbyterian, Arian, and even Socinian teachers, called to offer their spiritual instruction, and best square family pews, with good views of their respective pulpits, and plenty of cushions, to my broad-cloth manufacturing grandfather. Wholly unaccustomed to religious controversy, and unable to decide on the merits of the various candidates, he came to the determination of hearing each minister in ro-

tation, beginning with Mr. Cross, the General Baptist, and ending with Mr. Subtle, the Socinian. "At this rate," said my grandfather, "I can hear and judge for myself, and shall then decide where I shall take a permanent sitting." He had an odd and quaint manner of recounting how the various separatist ministers, one after the other, came to leave their cards, and pay their visits, during the period of his indecision; and not less so was his way of repeating the petitions offered up at each chapel, on his first appearance, by each minister, for "thy dear servant who appears for the first time in this place, and who has lately been brought to see the evils and dangers of a *mere formal* mode of worship." Mr. Cross, the Baptist, alarmed him, however, at his time of life, by requiring "*immersion*" as an evidence of his discipleship; Mr. Subtle, notwithstanding all his ingenuity and his eloquence, did not speak of the blessed Trinity as my grandfather had been accustomed to hear it mentioned in the Church of England Service; the Presbyterian minister was too slow in his delivery, and had a Scotch accent, for which my grandfather had a most mortal objection; the Lady Huntingdon preacher reminded him too much, by his robes

and surplice, of the Church he had left; and so, after three months of indecision, his vote was given in favour of the *Independent minister*, but not without many secret conferences and much negociation; the result of which was, that on the first vacancy in the office of deacons, either by death, resignation, or expulsion, he should have all the minister's support and influence as candidate for the senior deaconship of the Independent church and congregation. The Rev. Mr. Chapman was then the pastor, and the next Sunday my grandfather, grandmother, father, and aunt Mary, were all introduced to the square pew at the right-hand corner of the pulpit, on the ground floor, in which they were placed by Mr. Catt, the senior deacon. This was the history of my grandfather's dissenterism. Offended at not being churchwarden, he quarrelled with the Church, and, to secure the post of deacon, he became an Independent. My father, who was then a very young man, was unable to understand the connexion which subsisted between the not holding an office in the Church, and the not attending its services and sacraments; but he was silenced by my irritable grandfather, with that most unconvincing, but ordinary assurance of

the self-willed and the petulant, "*that he would know better as he grew older.*" My father, then a youth, was indeed soon reconciled to the change, since, as there was at that time no afternoon service in the Independent meeting-house, he loitered in the garden, or slept on the sofa, and greatly preferred the evening attendance at Mr. Chapman's to the quiet family prayers at home of former years, when the Church Service was gone through, and a sermon adapted to the understandings of both masters, children, and servants, was read by my grandfather.

My father, and his sister too, thought it much more "pleasant" to go to Mr. Chapman's on the Sunday evening, where the lights and singing were so attractive, and where there were no responses to make, but where each one looked about at his neighbours whilst the minister, with his eyes wide open, prayed for twenty minutes an extempore prayer. To my grandparents the change at first appeared neither agreeable nor pious, but the Rubicon had been passed, the contract had been signed, and my grandfather was known to the church and congregation as the deacon *in perspective*. Sometimes indeed they would murmur in a low tone of voice to each other, about "the beautiful

prayers they had lost"—and occasionally would let slip, even before my father and his sister, the admission, that "*the collects were inimitable*;" but then the rector *read his* sermons, and Mr. Chapman did not; and at the church meetings in the Independent vestry my father soon found that he was, what he could not be at the parish church, Mr. Uppermost. If a pew door would not close without creaking, my father was consulted. If Miss Betsy Smallgrass thought Mr. Chapman "*did not preach the gospel*," my grandfather was appealed to. If Sir John Marsh's housemaid, who took a prominent part at the Independent church meetings, thought the clerk set bad "*outlandish tunes*," my grandfather was called in as the umpire. If the old maiden lady in "pew 36" complained that "she could not hear the minister," my grandfather was solicited to call on Mr. Chapman and beg him to "speak up." If Mr. Jacob Wells, one of the two trustees, thought that some alterations should be made in the *trust-deed*, since originally the founder was a Presbyterian, and now the trusts had all been violated! by their becoming *Independents*, my grandfather was besought to urge on Mr. Wells the duty of *silence*, lest the affair should

come to the ears of the Rev. Mr. M'Kenzie from Aberdeenshire, who might perchance whisper something about the violation aforesaid to the Attorney-general, and entreat him to become *Relator* in a horrible Chancery suit. In fact, though as yet my father was only a deacon *in perspective*, he was the man of all work to the chapel, and the deacons, clerk, pastor, and church members, did not "dare to call their souls their own" without, if not his permission, at least his previously promised ratification. True it was that my grandfather found himself a great man among very small ones. The head deacon was Mr. Catt, a linendraper, and the junior deacon Mr. Mott, a plumber. My grandfather was the only man who could pretend to claim the title of an esquire, and one of the greatest obstacles in the way of having a *large* Sunday-school was, that there was a lamentable deficiency of teachers:—or, in plain terms, the children were as well, if not better instructed, than either deacons, wives, sons, or daughters. Now and then, indeed, the memory of my grandfather would trouble his then recent dissenterism with recollections of the old family pew in the church, where he had so many years worshipped with pleasure and profit.

amongst the most respectable and respected of his fellow-citizens ; but “ dear Mr. Chapman ” took care very often to remind him with observable energy, “ that the Poor had the gospel preached to them,” as though the rich had been specially excluded when the divine command was uttered, “ Go into *all* the world, and preach the gospel to *every* creature !” My grandmother was long before she could get accustomed to sermons of an hour and a-half long, and to a prayer of but twenty minutes—to a *portion* of a chapter, or a “ short psalm as the only reading of the Word of God,” with no morning psalms of David, no two lessons, no epistle, and no gospel : but which Mr. Chapman and his clerk thought amply and ably supplied when they sung *seven* verses *in alto* of one of Watts’ hymns, to a long or short metre tune, so unlike the original as to be *nearly* of their own composing. At length Mr. Deacon Catt departed this life, the pulpit was hung in black, the galleries were covered with a sort of dark brown black sackcloth, Mr. Chapman announced the “ *melancholy tidings*,” to the church and congregation, and a funeral sermon was preached to the, said to be, “ mourning assembly.” There were times, when among the old Non-

conformists, eminent virtue, special piety, and distinguished holiness, were called to the remembrance of weeping thousands who deplored the loss of such benefactors of the human race, and such ornaments to the church and the world. It was in those times even thought dangerous to the quiet sobriety, and retiring modesty of genuine faith, hope, and charity, in a private Christian, to speak of the departed, even the departed great, as well as good, to their survivors; but now a servant girl who loved her Saviour and rejoiced in his grace; a poor countryman, who as he ploughed up the soil sang a hymn with Christian pleasure and pious joy, cannot descend to their properly obscure and quiet graves, without being brought before the congregations at the dissenting meeting-houses in the shape of funeral sermons with those "*last sayings*" which should remain dear and sacred indeed to those who heard them, but which ought not to be blazoned forth to crowded meetings and mixed assemblies. Oh! for the cultivation of that quiet piety, that unboasting godliness, that deep humility, in the breasts of our poorer population, which would indeed harmonize with their lot in life, which

is, or should be, "*to keep the noiseless tenor of their way.*"

The deceased Mr. Catt had been deacon of the church and congregation for some fifteen years, and during that period had listened to many an angry debate, taken part in many a stormy discussion, and been referred to as umpire in more than one contested election for membership, where the *ballot* was adopted as the mode of voting. What could be said to advantage of a quiet or a noisy country linen-draper from the pulpit? Had he never too much extolled his goods and merchandize to his young and unwary purchasers? So much the better. Had he always cautioned his fair buyers against purchasing prints that would not wash, and ginghamms that would not retain their colour? So much the better. Had he always given the best "yardage," as well to those who looked on whilst he measured, as to those who ordered, by letter, the goods they required? So much the better. But this was *not* subject-matter for discourse to a Sunday evening auditory, assembled (at least, as they ought to have been) to worship the eternal Creator, the blessed Redeemer, and the

adored Sanctifier of their souls. Yet Mr. Catt was extolled in a sermon of nearly two hours' length; his *generosity* to the church and minister were dwelt on in glowing terms—and his probable successor (my worthy grandsire) hung down his head in real or affected modesty, whilst Mr. Chapman consoled his afflicted auditory with the *joyful* intelligence, that the place of the departed Mr. Catt was already more than bespoken for the only squire of the congregation, the broad-cloth manufacturer. But my grandfather was not destined to gain his appointment without some opposition. One of his turned-off apprentices had opened a shop, with the aid of some of his relatives, and had become a man of no small importance at the meeting of Mr. Chapman; and a dress-maker, with whom my grandmother had had a serious dispute as to the last bill for the making of her morning dresses, and refused to employ any longer—contrived to get up no small stir and opposition amongst the members to the election of my grandfather. His former attachment to the Church was the first and most formidable argument against him. “*Why* did he leave the Church?” asked the ex-apprentice, in a tone of one who is in possession of

secret and confidential evidence. Aye, "*why*" did he become an "Independent?" re-echoed the discarded dressmaker, who had heard Mrs. Chapman declare, that my grandfather might have been a "horrible Baptist," or a "shocking Presbyterian," if her husband had not had the *prudence* to secure him, by promising him all his influence, to get him appointed *head* deacon at the next vacancy. This imprudent declaration of the ex-milliner had well nigh led to a very different "*denouement*" to that which was expected; since Mr. Mott, the plumber, who, during the lifetime of his departed friend, Mr. Catt, had cheerfully submitted "to his superior information and influence, admitted that he '*did*' feel that now '*he*' ought to be the *Senior* deacon, and my grandfather, the *Junior*." Mr. Chapman was appealed to. For a moment the question was doubtful; on the one hand, all precedents in the church books were in favour of Mr. Mott; but then my grandfather was a squire, the only man in the congregation who had the pretension to be a gentleman, and was such an acquisition in more ways than one to "*the cause*," that Mr. Chapman decided in *his* favour. So, contrary to all precedents in the history of the

meeting-house, "might overcame right," and my grandfather was elected *Senior* deacon. To reconcile Mr. Mott to his disappointment, and to keep him from deserting to the Baptist or Presbyterian cause, he was promised the first vacant post in the Trustee Board, and with this engagement, ratified by my grandfather, the disappointed plumber agreed to be satisfied. But my grandfather had not yet gone through the whole of his fiery, but to him unexpected ordeal ; for his ex-apprentice got a requisition signed by *five* members, himself being one, for a SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CHURCH, to take *into consideration the propriety of confirming him in his new appointment.* In vain did Mr. Chapman call on the requisitionists ; in vain did Mr. Mott add the weight of his influence to that of the minister ; the requisitionists would not yield, and a church meeting was duly convened from the pulpit, as requested. The next week was devoted to a brisk and active canvass. Glass coaches were promised to be sent in my grandfather's interest to bring down the sick, the bed-ridden, or the gouty, to this special church meeting ; tea, supper, and even beds were promised and secured to those who resided in the country, and who

could not return in the evening after a warm and late debate and election, to their distant farm-houses or cottages; and all the spare guineas of my grandfather were set in motion, to defeat this ex-apprentice and ex-milliner opposition. "*All is not gold that glitters,*" said my grandfather, as Mr. Chapman left with a twenty-pound Bank of England note, out of which he was to pay *some arrears of rent* of four hesitating and even refractory members; but it was too late for him to retreat, though he *sometimes* sighed for his old high pew in his parish church, the friendly nod of his respectable fellow parishioners, and the quietness and repose of former days. At length the day and hour of this *special church meeting* arrived, and Mr. Chapman, as usual, took the chair. The business of the meeting was commenced by the ex-apprentice. He said, "*Far be it from me, Mr. Chairman, to indulge in any personal* opposition to the proposed senior deacon—far be it from me to relate to you the acts of injustice and severity he has exercised towards myself; I have a higher duty to discharge, and, painful as it is to me to perform it, I must discharge it to the last." The charges against my grandfather were the

following: 1st., that he had only become a Dissenter through disappointment. 2nd, that he was no more an Independent than he was a Baptist or a Presbyterian. 3rd, that he had behaved with austerity and severity towards Palmer, the author of this opposition; and, 4th, that his wife (my worthy grandmother) had turned off, in an unjust and cruel manner, her disappointed and ex-milliner. These were serious charges. The offended ex-apprentice called for his witnesses. They all appeared. In vain did my grandfather confront, and Mr. Chapman cross-examine them. The charges were all proved, and it was decided to proceed to the vote. Mr. Chapman declared the meeting suspended for half an hour. He called out the refractory members one after the other, with the exception of the requisitionists, into the chapel. He exhorted, entreated, implored them. The half-hour expired. The ex-milliner claimed to be heard. She demanded *scrutineers*. She objected to the votes of three members who had not attended any church meeting for *two years*. Her protests were overruled by Mr. Chapman. "She declared that she felt no hostility to any one, but that her conscience could not allow her to remain silent."

Mr. Robins, the keeper of an eating-house, applauded her with vehemence. The clerk wrung his hands. The junior deacon, Mr. Mott, looked as if he wished the vaults beneath would open to receive him. The pastor quivered, and at length the BALLOT commenced. When all had voted, the contents of Mr. Chapman's hat (for that was the balloting box) were spread upon the table, and my grandfather was declared to be *confirmed* in his appointment of senior deacon. "Let us sing a hymn," said Mr. Chapman; the clerk struck up a well-known doxology. My grandfather joined *loudly* in the chorus; and five minutes afterwards he had left the vestry of the Independent meeting-house, convinced that he had accepted no sinecure, and that he must make up his mind either to expel the two X's or to be eventually deprived of his new appointment. My grandmother was, nevertheless, delighted at the triumph, and Mr. Chapman partook of a hearty supper at my grandfather's dwelling.

The election of my grandfather to the post of senior deacon, and, above all, the active part taken by Mr. Chapman in his favour, led to a series of results which are distressing to think on, and yet more so to record, and to which I

shall now invite the attention of my readers. They successively occupied much time to bring about, but the first proceeding of *George Palmer* was to draw up a PROTEST against my grandfather's election in the following terms. I have preferred retaining the original authorship as well as sentiments, of this strange but momentous production, as it was prepared by George himself.

“PROTESTATION.

“Us the undersigned members of the meeting house, assemblin for the worship of God under the parstoral care of the Reverend Mr. William Chapman, feel it to be our himperatif duty to PROTEST against the helection of Mr. James Rawston to the offise of senhior deacon to the congregasion afore-said. Our motives are the followin.

“1st. The said Mr. James Rawston was brought up an Hepiscopist, and would have kept so to the end of his days, if he had not been disappointed in his hendeavours to become churchwarden of St. Mary's.

“2nd. The said Mr. James Rawston is no Independent in the rite sense of that word, since he negotiated with Mr. Subtle, the Socinian, with Mr. M'Kenzie, the Scotchman, with Mr. Cross, the Himmersionist, and with many others before he joined our Church.

“ 3rd. The said Mr. James Rawston as no rite to be helected senhior deacon, since Mr. Mott, according to the hinhalenable rite of our Church is intituled to that post, espeshally as Mr. Mott is a reglar Independent.

“ 4th. Us, the undersigned, pledge ourselves to the Church and the conggregation to see the rites of this question examined into, and never to rest satisfied till our funddamentall regarlations are carried into full heffect.

(Signed)

“ GEORGE PALMER,

“ SARAH MARSHALL,

“ BETSEY SMALLGRASS,

“ N. BLACKMANN,

“ JABEZ WHITTLE.”

Although Mr. Whittle's name appeared at the foot of the protest, it was not until he had altered nearly all the badly spelt words, since he flattered himself “ *that though he could not talk as George could, at least he was a good grammarian.*” Purged, then, of bad authography, the production was re-copied by George, and then transmitted to Mr. Chapman, the pastor, to enter in the minute book of this “Independent Church.” Mr. Chapman, acquainted with the characters of his protesting brethren and sisters, and knowing that they

were noisy and turbulent, chattering and scandalizing, began to regret that he had made himself so conspicuous in the election of my grandfather. What was to be done? If he refused to insert the protest in the minute book, the next thing the Requisitionists would do, would be to convoke a special church meeting (and three members could do this) to consider and report on his refusal; and yet if he entered the protest, it would descend from generation to generation in the annals of the Independent meeting-house that the senior deacon, in the year —, had been elected by a majority, though only half a Dissenter and no Independent. So Mr. Chapman found his way up in the evening (a Saturday evening) at “pipe time,” just before supper, to my grandfather’s back-parlour. “Well, Mr. Chapman,” said my grandfather, “and to what circumstance am I indebted for a visit from *you* to-night, a Saturday evening, an evening especially devoted to preparation for the Sunday?”

“To a very unpleasant circumstance, I assure you, Mr. Rawston,” replied the minister, “for I have only received about two hours since, sent expressly on a Saturday to annoy and disturb me in my studies, this PROTEST

against your election." My grandfather coloured up. The leaven of the "old man" was unhappily in his nature, and he had not grace enough in his heart to brook with patience the trials of the road. "PROTEST! Mr. Chapman, and who is it signed by?" "Why you may guess pretty well, Mr. Rawston," replied the minister; "there is George of course, your former apprentice — Sarah Marshall, the former milliner of your good lady — Betsy Smallgrass, the blacksmith's daughter, who says, 'I do not preach the gospel' — Nathaniel Blackman, who is offended with us both for not appointing him pew-opener in the gallery — and Jabez Whittle, who astonishes me most, since I buy all my *stationery* of him, and have given him the supply of our Sunday School." "Are those *all*?" asked my grandfather. "Yes, and enough too, Mr. Rawston." "I do not say they are not enough, and five too many, Mr. Chapman, but at any rate we need not be affrighted either by their numbers, or by their names."

"But what am I to do with the protest?" "BURN IT," said my grandfather, retaining still some of the gentlemanly and off-hand views of a respectable though a petulant man.

"BURN IT!! did you say, Mr. Rawston? Burn

a protest signed by five members ? No—no ; why it is more than my pulpit is worth to do so. You are not yet acquainted with our *Independent* regulations, Mr. Rawston, or you would not offer me such counsel as this ; *all* my predecessors, Sir, have *always* duly entered in the minutes of our church all protests, and——”

“And if all your predecessors were blockheads,” exclaimed my grandfather, railingly, “is that any reason you should be, Mr. Chapman?”

“Why no, to be sure,” rejoined the minister, “but I do not understand you—what do you mean ? pray explain your views fully, Mr. Rawston ; you know I have a great respect for you, and would go any *proper* length to serve you. But——”

“But what, Mr. Chapman ?”

“Why I could not act against the example of *all* my predecessors, could I, Mr. Rawston ? I *must* register the protest, mustn’t I ?”

“No,” said my grandfather ; and then, overcome with the apparent earnestness and agitation of poor Mr. Chapman, about what *he* regarded as the veriest trifle, he burst into a good hearty laugh.

“Come,—come, my worthy friend,” said my grandfather, putting on a less mirthful, but still a kind and contented tone, “if *this* be the only protest against my election, and *this* the

only source of your sorrows and doubts, let us take a cheerful pipe together, and a glass of my last October, and be not cast down by the follies of poor George Palmer.” “Well, Mr. Rawston,” said the minister, “I am sure I am glad to see you take so composedly this very sad affair; but still you have not answered my question, what am I *to do* with the *protest*?” “Burn it, I tell you once more,” said my grandfather, as he handed to Mr. Chapman a large clean pipe, and some best “short cut.” “Yes—yes, I understand you now, Mr. Rawston, you are pleased to be jocose; burn the pipe and burn the tobacco, I hope to do both, but not *burn* the *protest*.”

“*Yes, burn the protest*, Mr. Chapman—and that without delay,” and, suiting the action to the word, my grandfather stretched forth his hand to the fire, to commit the document to the flames.

“I beseech you—I beseech you,” said the alarmed and horrified minister, who, succeeding in rescuing it at the critical moment, folded it up carefully and placed it in the breast pocket of his coat.

“Why, my dear Mr. Rawston, I believed till now you were joking, when you said burn

it : simply to denote that you did not attach much value to it : but burn in reality a *protest* of five members, would be the act of an incendiary." "Of a *wise man*," retorted my grandfather, who could with difficulty suppress his laughter as he witnessed the nervousness and agitation of his worthy pastor.

For a short time the arrangement of the pipes and the praises of the ale occupied both my grandfather and Mr. Chapman. At length the latter recommenced. "But what am I *to do* with the *protest*?" "Why, what is the use of asking me, my good friend, since, in opposition to my counsel to burn it, you have placed it in your breast pocket?" "I have placed it there for the moment, I admit, Mr. Rawston, but what am I to do with it when I return home?"

"Burn it, Mr. Chapman."

"But what shall I gain by *burning it*?"

"Why, get rid of it, to be sure, and think no more of it."

"Yes, but when the next church meeting shall be held, what would be said *then*?"

"By whom?" asked my grandfather.

"By the Requisitionists, Mr. Rawston."

"Why, let them *say*, as they have *written*,

what they like ; I shall not less be the deacon, nor you less the pastor. Eh ! Mr. Chapman ?”

“ That’s true, Mr. Rawston ; but then *all* my predecessors *always* inserted *all* protests.”

“ By virtue of what act of parliament ?”

“ Act of parliament, Mr. Rawston ! why who ever thought of Dissenters being governed by *Acts of Parliament* ? You know, Mr. Rawston, we are *Independents*—and not of the National Religion. You have not yet got out of your Episcopalian notions, as George Palmer says ; and what would he not say if he heard you ask about acts of parliament governing Independents ? Why, don’t you know, Mr. Rawston, that the principle of Independency is, that *no laws, no government, no body*, neither King, Lords, nor Commons, have any right to govern us, but that we claim the inalienable right of governing ourselves ?”

“ Like the gipsies,” said my grandfather good-humouredly ; and Mr. Chapman replied, “ Well, be it so ; like the gipsies.”

“ But if you are not governed by act of parliament, and I confess I was wrong in making use of that phrase, since the Church of England left the Dissenters to make their own laws in

all *religious* matters ; still you have fixed law and regulations in your body, and I have often been going to ask you for a copy of the ‘ Laws and Regulations of the Independent Churches.’ ”

“ Indeed, Mr. Rawston, you are mistaken again. Who would, who could, have the right of making laws and regulations for *Independent* churches ? This would be to acknowledge a chief or head, or chiefs or heads, superior to ourselves. It would be to admit a sort of hierarchy, and these chiefs would be a kind of bishops like ‘ the hundred ministers ’ established for special purposes by John Wesley in his connexion ; ALL OF US are bishops, all priests, all teachers, and we make our *own* laws, and our *own* regulations, in each separate trust-deed. That is *Independency*, Sir, to be bound down to nothing and to nobody, and only to have to answer to ourselves.”

“ That is *Independent* indeed,” said my grandfather, “ but still this *trust-deed* of which you speak, and which I have not yet read, does *it* prescribe that all protests shall be entered by the minister in the minute book of the church ? ”

“ Oh no, Mr. Rawston—not a word about that.”

“Well, then, have you simply the precedents of your predecessors to guide you?”

“That is all,” Mr. Rawston.

“Then, Mr. Chapman, the day will come, you know, that *you* will be one of the *predecessors* of *future* pastors. Just take my advice. Burn George Palmer’s protest, and write on the minutes, ‘I, the undersigned pastor of the church and congregation, having received on the 16th day of November, in the year of our Lord—’”

“Oh, Mr. Rawston, we never put in *the year of our Lord*, we Independents never put that—that would be too *churchified*.”

“Well, then, leave it out; though I cannot understand that the leaving it out will change the *fact*; but leave it out, and go on to say, simply putting in the year, as a pagan would do—”

“No, Mr. Rawston, as an *Independent* would do.”

“Well, be it so, pagan or Independent; but let me go on with the minute you should enter: ‘having received a protest signed by so and so (giving their names), and dated so and so (giving the date), and which protest being an illegal and unwarrantable assumption on the part

of five members to protest against and contest the validity of the election of Mr. James Rawston to the post of senior deacon, after he had been duly elected and confirmed in his office by two majorities of the members, have thought fit, in the exercise of my discretion, not to insert that document in the records of the church, *but have burnt the protest.*' "

Mr. Chapman took his pipe from his mouth, laid it softly and deliberately on the large chimney hob; removed his spectacles, and placed them on the table; drank the rest of the "October ale" of the previous year which had remained in his glass, and then, like one who had awoke from a trance, exclaimed,

"Mr. Rawston, you are right; I WILL burn the protest!" A smile of satisfaction played involuntarily on the cheeks of my grandfather, who felt, that, as a *senior* deacon, he had already proved his influence and authority. But then, like an old adept in dominion, he said with solemnity and decision,

"*We will keep a copy of the protest, Mr. Chapman.*"

"Yes, and draw up the minute to be inserted in the book, Mr. Rawston."

Paper, pens, and ink, were soon supplied;

the "protestation" was copied; the minute to be inserted by the pastor drawn up in the very words in which I have given them above; and then the original "PROTESTATION" of George Palmer and company was committed to the flames.

"There, Mr. Rawston," said the dissenting minister, as he placed it on the fire, "I feel myself relieved of a burthen I scarcely knew how to bear. I will show these requisitionists that a worm will turn, and that an *Independent* minister has *some* blood in his veins, and *some* sense of 'dignity in his character.'"

So to supper they went, then to pipes; and, after family service performed by Mr. Chapman, they separated: my father to retire to rest, and the stimulated minister to reflect on the wondrous transactions of that fatal evening.

The next day, Sunday, my grandfather appeared at chapel in an entire new suit of black, glanced at the pews, singers, and lamps, as a master is wont to look over his own establishment; sang louder than usual; bowed protectingly to some, indifferently to others, and familiarly to few; and evidently felt, as well as looked, "I AM THE SENIOR DEACON!" The pew-opener paid special attention to *his* pew, went up two or three times to it to ask the

senior deacon if he wanted her, because his eye had merely *happened* to catch hers ; whilst the clerk gave out *two* common and *one* short-metre tunes which he knew to be *particular favourites* with Mr. Rawston. Mr. Chapman, somehow or other, looked as bold as a lion, denounced in his sermon “ *the sin of schism* ” (for there is such a thing as schism, when the dissenting laity oppose their teachers, though Mr. Binney says dissent is *not* schism) ; offered up a solemn prayer for the “ dear servant ” who had lately been appointed “ *senior deacon,* ” and then expressed “ *a hope* ” that Providence would “ overrule all events to the building up of the church and congregation under his (Mr. Chapman’s) care.”

All this passed off very well ; but towards the conclusion of the hymn after the sermon, George Palmer was observed to walk up to the clerk, place in his hand a written paper, and then return to his pew. The clerk opened the paper and read it, then looked at my grandfather, and made a sign that he did not know what to do. My grandfather slipped out of his pew, approached the clerk, read the paper, placed it in his pocket, returned to his seat, joined in the singing of the last verse of the

hymn, and, after the concluding short prayer and "benediction" were pronounced, looked as cool and unconcerned as if George Palmer had never proceeded to the clerk's desk.

This was more than George Palmer could bear. He looked red, he spoke aloud to the people in the next pew, he beckoned to Sarah Marshall and Jabez Whittle to come down from the gallery, and to Betsy Smallgrass and Nathaniel Blackmann, who sat below, not to move. The congregation retired but slowly. Mr. Chapman, although only partially aware of what had passed, still descended rather tottering to the pulpit stairs. My grandfather looked quite imperturbable, and, after about five minutes, both the deacons and the minister, as well as the clerk, were closeted in the vestry-room.

Before I proceed to relate the substance of what transpired within the closed doors, I shall recount the scene which took place in the chapel. Several of the members and congregation, anxious to know what all this meant, and why George Palmer was evidently in a state of so much excitement, remained lurking in the aisles; whilst himself and his four confederates assembled in the table-pew, like

daring men and women determined on some mighty deed ; or like the three deliverers of Switzerland who swore emancipation to old Helvetia !

“ Would any one have believed it possible ? ” asked George Palmer.

“ This comes of having a *hepiscopacy* in office,” ejaculated Sarah Marshall.

“ We must know the rights of this,” declared Betsy Smallgrass.

“ This won’t do as no how,” said Nathaniel Blackmann, “ for all the *harticles* of our *regulations* is against this here sort of thing.”

“ Be quiet, be quiet,” said Jabez Whittle, “ leave it all to Mr. Palmer and myself, we will see you *righted*.”

The listeners in the aisles could not make out from these incoherent sentences what had really occurred ; but the words “ *suppress a Requisition*,” being pronounced, the key to the whole was given, and one said it was a requisition against Mr. Rawston ; another, that it was against Mr. Chapman ; and a third, against the clerk for singing outlandish tunes ; but all agreed “ *it was a very serious business, and might lead to the dissolution of the church and congregation.*”

“ And IT WILL TOO,” said Betsy Smallgrass,

as she slammed in a truly *independent* spirit the door of the chapel after her ; “ mark my words, Miss Marshall. The SENIOR Deacon will ruin Mr. Chapman !! ”

Nothing then could be collected by the bystanders, but the *three* following facts :—that a Requisition had been signed by George Palmer and his friends, that George had given it to the clerk, and that Mr. Rawston had taken it from him, and put it in his pocket ; thus, not allowing the clerk aforesaid to carry it up the pulpit stairs to the minister, and thus preventing the minister from reading it to the congregation.

“ I would give one of my ears,” said the old maiden lady who sat in pew 36, “ to know what that Requisition was about ; I cannot eat my dinner till I have ascertained ; ” and so off she went to George Palmer’s, and learnt all the particulars. Those particulars it is unnecessary to relate, as I shall now proceed to detail what transpired in the vestry. For the sake of historical accuracy, it is however well to add, that the old maiden lady became half a convert to George Palmer’s views, especially as he fully agreed with her, “ *that Mr. Chapman’s voice was very effeminate, and not at all suited to a large congregation.* ”

When the Rev. Mr. Chapman, Mr. Senior Deacon Rawston, Mr. Junior Deacon Mott, and Jesse Piper, the clerk, had assembled in the vestry, the following conversation ensued with great rapidity, and some animation.

Clerk. Oh, dear! Mr. Rawston, what trouble you will get me into by putting that '*Inquisition*' in your pocket.

The Senior Deacon. Not Inquisition, but *Requisition*, Mr. Piper.

Clerk. Well, *Inquisition* or *Requisition*, just as you will, but, as I declare to you, I really don't know whether I stand on my head or my heels, as the saying is, one is liable in such moments as these to make such mistakes and many others.

Mr. Chapman. What *Requisition*, Jesse?

The Junior Deacon. Yes, what *Requisition*, Mr. Piper?

The Senior Deacon. Why, this *Requisition*, my good friends, which I could not allow to be sent up to you, Sir (turning to Mr. Chapman), because I highly disapprove of giving out such notices at chapel *at all*, and especially immediately after divine service. In addition to this, we must put an end to this constant succession of church meetings, and to

the agitation and injury they are likely to create.

Mr. Chapman. Pray read the Requisition, Mr. Rawston ; from George Palmer, I suppose, and his four associates.

The Senior Deacon. Precisely so, my dear Sir, and for that reason, also, I would not suffer you to be disturbed by it ; but here it is.

Mr. Chapman, who was warm and fatigued, was prevailed on by Jesse to take a glass of wine, and then to sit down, whilst the senior deacon read the following REQUISITION.

“ We the undersigned, members of the Independent church assembling under the pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Chapman, do hereby convene a MEETING of the members of the church, to be holden on Friday evening next, at half-past Six precisely, to take into consideration the conduct of the aforesaid Rev. Mr. Chapman, in obtaining by means of threats, bribes, entreaties, and the paying of arrears of rent due from certain members of this church to their landlords, a fictitious and forced majority in favour of Mr. James Rawston, contrary to the rules and regulations of the said church, and in opposition to the laws of the realm in such cases made and provided.”

“That’s capital,” said Mr. Chapman; “what next?”

Mr. Chapman was put on his mettle.

“*That’s awful*,” said Mr. Mott.

“What’s awful?” asked Mr. Rawston.

“I shall have an *Inquisition* against *me* next,” said Jesse Piper.

“It’s awful to think of what will follow,” replied Mr. Mott to the inquiry of his fellow deacon.

“It’s a scandalous piece of business,” said Mr. Chapman, “and you have done perfectly right, Mr. Rawston, in not allowing me to be insulted by such a document.”

“Yes, it’s scandalous,” said Jesse, the clerk, who, seeing the minister and the senior deacon pulled together, soon made up *his* mind as to the course *he* should pursue.

“A glass of wine, Mr. Rawston?” asked the clerk, with a sort of imploring look, as he took the bottle in one hand and a glass in the other.

“Yes, just *one* glass,” replied my grandfather.

“And I will take one too,” said the *junior* deacon.

“And a glass will do *you* good, my faithful Jesse,” said Mr. Chapman.

And so then it was time to adjourn, and to leave till *Monday* the decision of the question *what should be done?* In the mean time it was resolved “*to take no notice of the Requisition.*”

Sunday afternoon was spent by far the greater portion of the church, if not the congregation, in unusual visitings, inquiries, and conversations, as to the proceedings of the morning; and never was the chapel fuller than on that evening. George Palmer was unusually early in his attendance, and loitered about the great entrance door, in order to answer inquiries, and excite interest. Sarah Marshall was placed at the left hand side of the gallery stairs, and Nathaniel Blackmann at the right, but Betsy Smallgrass was not present, and Jabez Whittle entered with the air of an offended magistrate, just as Jesse Piper rose to give out the two first lines of the first hymn.

Mr. Chapman was somewhat surprised at the unusually large attendance of hearers, and feared that it portended no good. The senior deacon examined with a scrutinizing eye the new faces. The junior deacon wrote on a piece of paper, and sent it by the pew-opener to my grandfather,

“*I fear we shall have an uproar.*”

My grandfather replied, "*I have no fear at all.*"

So the service commenced — and Mr. Chapman prayed, read, and preached, in all respects much about the same as usual.

When the sermon was terminated, and the concluding hymn had been sung, Mr. Chapman rose and spoke as follows:—

"The members of the church are requested to attend at a special church-meeting, on Friday evening next, at Seven precisely, to take into consideration the propriety of reprimanding, suspending, or expelling certain members of the church, for disorderly and unchristian conduct."

A solemn silence succeeded for about half a minute. The *junior* deacon looked confounded. The *senior* deacon appeared enchanted. Jesse Piper was ready to sink into the earth. Even the refractory members were astounded; and after a short pause, Mr. Chapman said, "Let us pray." And he did so. He prayed for peace, but threatened war; he prayed for quietness, but announced hostilities; he prayed that the harmony of the church might not be interrupted, but took care, in and through his prayer, to let the requisitionists understand, that he was

not about yielding without a struggle. The congregation was overwhelmed — the church stupified—and Sunday evening closed.

Mr. Chapman set out early on Monday morning to the house of the *senior* deacon, according to previous appointment, and, that the interview might be strictly private, a fire was lighted in the front parlour. The servants and clerks were instructed by my grandfather not to allow him to be interrupted by any one, however important or urgent the business ; and the senior deacon and his minister were closeted from *ten* till *one*, with the trust-deed, the minute book, and the last Requisition of the schismatics. My grandfather began by observing, that he confessed he regretted Mr. Chapman should have come to so hasty a decision as to convoke a church-meeting on the ensuing Friday, without first consulting himself and Mr. Mott: as time was scarcely allowed for making those preparations which were necessary for such an assembly. Mr. Chapman however intimated, “ that there *were* occasions when personal dignity and personal respect required prompt and energetic measures, and that Mrs. Chapman had urged him so strongly to the course he had taken, whilst drinking their tea on Sunday

evening, that he felt he had no other line left open for him." This was quite sufficient. My grandfather had preserved *his* dignity, by making the observation; and Mr. Chapman *his*, by the reply. So they proceeded to business.

"Well now, Mr. Chapman," said the senior deacon, "the first thing I have to observe is this, that this *last* Requisition is in the handwriting of *Mr. Farmer*, the attorney, who was engaged against me in a cause of *Rawston* versus *Stone*, which I had to bring against Mr. Stone for a trespass, and in which I recovered a hundred pounds damages. Mr. Farmer is known to be an antinomian dissenter. He encourages William Jenkins in his out-of-door preachings on the Moor, and has hired a cottage at Lane End, for a week-day service, and no doubt it is for these reasons that George Palmer has employed him. Farmer is himself a dissenter, understands all the differences between our sects, made out the trust-deed for the Ranters' chapel over the way, and owes me a grudge for having called him "*an ignorant fellow*," in open court, on the day of the trial of my action against his client, Mr. Stone, when he gave his evidence as to the course of a stream of water, which was the subject of dis-

pute. Besides all this, Farmer is keen, shuffling, and will not hesitate to resort to every contrivance to secure success to his clients."

"This explains, my dear Sir," said Mr. Chapman, "a visit I received last Saturday from Mr. Farmer. He said that he was employed to prepare a chapel-deed, for a chapel erecting in a neighbouring county, and that he would be greatly obliged to me to allow him the use of mine for an hour or two, to enable him, as he was not very well acquainted with this description of documents, to prepare the trusts in a suitable manner."

"And did you do so?" asked my grandfather with anxiety.

"No, Mr. Rawston, I did not *lend* the deed, as I informed him I never allowed it to go out of my possession, since the last trustee who had died had handed it over to me to keep; but I told him he was perfectly welcome to examine the deed at my house—and he did so,—and made copious extracts."

"Copious extracts, Mr. Chapman? Did you say you allowed him to make copious extracts?"

"Why, indeed I did, Mr. Rawston, and now most deeply do I regret it."

“You will regret it to the end of your days, Mr. Chapman,” replied my grandfather with some warmth, and a pause of several minutes ensued.

At length Mr. Chapman broke the silence. “Well, Mr. Rawston, what is to be DONE? What steps shall be taken to secure a majority on Friday, and put an end to this schism without delay?”

“First of all, Mr. Chapman, you must see personally *every* member of the Church—state your case—show the requisition—appeal to their sympathies—and obtain as large an attendance of your *friends* as possible. Clarke, I will see myself—and so I will Roberts, Trowbridge, and Manton. They all owe me some obligations, and I have the right to insist on their being present. I have no apprehensions that they will refuse me. Then you must get William Scales, Samuel Stow, Anne Wright, and Jacob Wheeler, whose arrears of rents you paid, to give their notes of hand for the monies I advanced for them, through you, to their landlords, which will convert the gifts into loans—and if they behave well, we will return them these notes when the affair is over. We have a right to *lend* our money as we will—

perhaps we had not the right to *give* it. Then you must prepare an address, which you will either read or speak, as you may feel most disposed to do, on Friday, in which you should remind the meeting that you have been the pastor for thirty-four years, and that you have never been so insulted before, by even the most violent of all past oppositionists. These, I think, are the principal measures to be taken, except indeed that my purse is at your disposal to pay for two glass coaches, to bring down the sick and aged members, and convey them home again; for, *cost what it will, we must beat them now.*"

Mr. Chapman listened with great attention to these plans of his *senior* deacon, and approved all, without hesitation, except the requiring William Scales, Samuel Stow, Anne Wright, and Jacob Wheeler, to give notes of hand for the monies he had paid to their landlords for their arrears of rent. This required more depth and skill than he felt he possessed, and he feared it might lead to new secessions and loud complaints.

My grandfather clearly saw that this was the weak part of Mr. Chapman's case, since my grandfather had never heard of these per-

sons before his candidateship for the post of senior deacon; and therefore his having paid as gifts, and not as loans, the arrears of their rents to their landlords, through Mr. Chapman, “did look *something* like bribery,” and was not to be got over very easily. But, still, if Mr. Chapman went awkwardly and clumsily to ask these persons now for their four notes of hand, they might be alarmed and refractory, and if this fact came to the ears of Tom Farmer, he would make the most of it for his clients, and urge it in writing, and verbally, to Mr. Chapman’s detriment. What was to be done? It was difficult to decide.

“Why, suppose, Mr. Rawston,” said the minister, “I should call on these four persons, and ask them whether they considered you had ‘*given*’ or ‘*lent*’ the money; inquire of them to whom they had spoken of your conduct, and in what terms; and then act accordingly?”

My grandfather thought that this was the wisest course, it being understood that if they said “*lent*,” then that Mr. Chapman should obtain from them their promissory notes at a year after date, payable to Mr. Rawston, or his order; and if they said “*given*,” then that

Mr. Chapman should take occasion to suggest that "none of them could hesitate to say at the church-meeting that they had voted for Mr. Rawston from *principle*, and because they regarded him as the most suitable person."

"But if they will *not* say this?" asked Mr. Chapman.

"Why, then, tell them to stop away," replied my grandfather—and on this point they were unanimous.

"There is now another subject, Mr. Rawston," said the pastor in a dejected and anxious tone.

"What is that, Mr. Chapman?"

"Why, the unfortunate protest I burnt. One of my grounds of accusation against George Palmer and the rest of them is, the sending me the protest after two decisions of the majority of the members in your favour, as an act on their part of impertinent and unwarrantable interference. But, now, I have no protest to produce—and moreover, have recorded in the minute book that I have *burnt it*. I am afraid, Mr. Rawston, this will give great offence to some *moderate* members, especially when connected with your suppression of the Requisition of yesterday."

“Not at all—not at all,” said the senior deacon, with some warmth and impetuosity; “we either *have a majority*, or we have it *not*. If we *HAVE* a majority, it will vote *FOR* us: and if we have *NOT* a majority, we shall be defeated. That’s the end of the matter.”

“We *may* have a majority when we are *right*, Mr. Rawston, but not when we are *wrong*, and surely it is wise to look all our difficulties in the face, for now George Palmer has got into Tom Farmer’s hands we shall be sure to have a law, if not a Chancery, suit.”

“Well, Mr. Chapman, but the protest is burnt, isn’t it?”

“Yes, certainly, Mr. Rawston, you saw me burn it.”

“Then can we change our position in this respect, Mr. Chapman?”

“Certainly not; but what excuse or plea am I to make for this act?”

“None whatever, Mr. Chapman, except *that* contained in the minute book. Stand upon your *rights*, if you have any, and try the question of the *rights* of an *Independent* minister.”

“That would be the most dangerous of all possible questions to try, Mr. Rawston, for the ‘RIGHTS’ of an *Independent* minister, as far as

his church and congregation are concerned, may be summed up in these words, 'CATCH WHAT HE CAN—KEEP ALL HE CATCHES—AND PUT UP WITH EVERY THING !' ”

“So, then, Mr. Chapman, an Independent minister has no rights at all?”

“None, Mr. Rawston. I remember Rowland Hill once saying in my hearing, ‘Why, Sir, there isn’t a greater *slave* on the face of the earth than an *Independent* minister. He is at the beck and call of every old washer-woman; subject to the reproach and impudence of every young coxcomb; dependent on the least generous portion of the dissenters for his bread and cheese; and subject every hour of his life to lose one or both by some conspiracy or other, either by the church against himself or the congregation; or by the congregation against himself or his church.’ ”

“I am sorry to hear it,” said my grandfather; “but let us look a little to-day at our TRUST-DEED, and see what are the powers and the rights, of deacons, minister, trustees, church, and congregation.”

“You will find very little of this, Mr. Rawston, and I sadly fear, now Tom Farmer has got possession of our trusts, if he can raise

money enough for a suit, he will drag us all through the court of Chancery."

"I am still more sorry to hear that, Mr. Chapman ; but let us see." So Mr. Chapman drew forth from a brown paper parcel a white paper parcel, and from the white paper parcel a blue sheet of ordinary paper, which contained *two* parchment deeds, one marked "*Lease for a year*," and the other "RELEASE AND TRUST DEED." My grandfather, who had freehold property of his own, knew perfectly well that the "*Lease for a year*" was a mere legal fiction, and that the "*Release and Trust Deed*" was the only one of the two documents entitled to attention.

This document was written on two skins of parchment, and on the back of each skin were two deed-polls, being nominations of new trustees, on the death of the old ones. The Release was dated 17th January, 1758, and was made between Sophia Timmings, spinster, of the one part, and Thomas Tompkins, Stephen Prince, and William Figgins, of the other part. The deed began by saying that certain lands and tenements, chapel, buildings, hereditaments, and premises, with their appurtenances, of which a plan was also given in the margin, were the

property of Miss Timmings ; and then that she, the said Miss Timmings, being a *Presbyterian*, had built a chapel or place of worship for the service of Almighty God, and had resolved on conveying it to Thomas Tompkins, &c., upon the trusts thereafter mentioned."

Here my grandfather paused. "*Being a Presbyterian*, Mr. Chapman ; what, was the founder of *your* chapel a *Presbyterian* ?"

"Oh ! yes, Mr. Rawston, to be sure she was ; I thought you knew that. You know when you called on Mr. Wells to ask him to be less communicative as to our concerns and trusts to strangers, and not to speak of our 'Presbyterian origin' in the presence of Mr. Mackenzie."

"Yes, yes, I remember that, Mr. Chapman ; but I had no idea that the *founder* was a *Presbyterian*, and doubtless the deed Presbyterian too ; but let us see."

So my grandfather read on as follows :—"To have and to hold the said lands and tenements, chapel, buildings, hereditaments, and premises, with their appurtenances, unto the said Thomas Tompkins, Stephen Prince, and William Figgins, their heirs and assigns, UPON THE TRUSTS FOLLOWING (that is to say):

“UPON TRUST, that the said chapel shall be appropriated for the solemn worship of Almighty God, according to the doctrines, discipline, and principles of the religious sect or body calling themselves *Presbyterians*.”

“That’s clear enough,” said my grandfather; “Miss Timmings was a Presbyterian, and she founded a *Presbyterian chapel*; very natural and very pious: but how in the world has it happened that it is now an INDEPENDENT chapel?”

“Oh, Mr. Rawston, let not that surprise you. The *principles* of *Dissent* are not fixed and stationary, like those of the Church of England. *Presbyterians* to-day, *Independents* to-morrow, *Baptists* ten years hence—and, I am sorry to say, sometimes Socinians afterwards. I heard an old Independent minister once declare at the Wiltshire Association, ‘that if all the chapel deeds of all the Independent meeting-houses in England should be examined, not one out of ten would be found to be strictly legal; but then,’ said he, ‘we are *all dissenters*; some think this, and others think that, but we *all agree* to *oppose the Church*, and whenever we are called upon to assist to pull down the successor of St. Peter, we give a

willing and cheerful hand, *because we have all an INTEREST in that.*' ”

My grandfather looked as a man *will* look who thinks he has fallen into strange company, and it came across his mind at that moment that this system of defeating the intentions of a testator or founder, by preaching and establishing the doctrines and discipline of a sect different to that which he approved, was very much “like ‘doing evil that good might come.’ ” But it was now too late for *him* to recede: for my grandfather was the *senior* deacon.

Mr. Chapman perceiving, however, that his explanation had not been wholly satisfactory, sought to render it more so by saying, “You know, Mr. Rawston, that when Miss Timmings lived, there were a *great many* Presbyterians in these parts, and she founded a chapel for *them*. But if she had lived now, it is most likely she would *not* have been a Presbyterian, since Mr. M'Kenzie has not fifty to hear him of a Sunday evening, whereas I have from two to three hundred. The Presbyterians have now become Independents, and have taken their chapels with them. This is very natural.”

“No,” said my grandfather, “I think not, Mr. Chapman. It is very natural that when a

man becomes an Independent, he should give his money to the Independent chapel; but when a man is a *trustee* of a *Presbyterian* chapel, it is not at all natural that he should violate the trusts on which he holds it, and suffer a *Presbyterian* chapel to become an *Independent* meeting-house."

"And yet this occurs every day, Mr. Rawston. I will undertake to say that if some ill-tempered, cross-grained, Episcopalian member of parliament (forgive my plainness, Sir) should move in the House of Commons or in the House of Lords for a committee to inquire into the present state of the dissenting chapels, and into the trusts of their trust-deeds, and the execution of those trusts, not one out of twenty would be found in regular order. Some would be without trustees at all; some with only one instead of two or three; some Anabaptist chapels would be seen to be in the possession of Presbyterians, and very many Presbyterian chapels in the possession of Independents, and not a few of all in the hands of Socinians. I dare say the day *will* come that some inquiry of this sort will be instituted, and then there'll be a '*pretty kettle of fish*' for us, as well as the rest—eh, Mr. Rawston?"

My grandfather nodded his assent, but still looked much more staggered than he was convinced—the which Mr. Chapman perceiving, he continued as follows.

“And yet you know, Mr. Rawston, I don’t see any way of preventing this. It is part of the character and genius of Dissent. We all claim the right, you know, of *individual judgment* upon *all* points in matters of religion. Even the Apostles themselves we regard as fallible, for you know St. Paul himself admitted that he spoke as a man; and we claim the right of interpreting, according to the best of our judgments, the opinions of the Apostle. So that *to-day* I am an Independent minister and my people are Independents; but if to-morrow new light to my mind should render it clear to me that I ought to become a Baptist, why, I should do all I could to promulgate such doctrines as I should then believe, after such new light upon my mind, to be true.”

“But, first of all, resigning your post as *Independent* minister, Mr. Chapman.”

“Oh, that would depend upon circumstances, Mr. Rawston. I know of many cases where this and other changes of a similar description on the part of the minister have led to the ma-

jority of the church and congregation changing too."

"But what has become of the minority, Mr. Chapman?"

"Oh, they have formed '*a new cause*,' and met in a school-room, or at an assembly-room, until they obtained a new place of worship."

"Do not say '*a new cause*,' Mr. Chapman, for *theirs* would be the *old* cause, as they would remain faithful to the original trusts, and original doctrines and discipline."

"That's very true, Mr. Rawston; but we never think of these things now. Whichever way the *majority* thinks, the deed, doctrines, and discipline turn—and this is what is called '*THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE*.'"

"It's an odd sort of '*principle*,' at any rate," said the senior deacon; "but come, Mr. Chapman, let us go on with the deed."

So my grandfather read through the other trusts and provisoes of the deed very deliberately, the substance of which was, first, that the chapel was never to be appropriated to any other than Presbyterian worship; second, that the Presbytery at a contiguous city was to be consulted, and appealed to in all church matters; third, that the ruling elders were to at-

tend to the government of the church ; fourth, that the minister was to have a casting vote ; and fifth, that the vacancies in the trusteeship, when and as the trustees died, were to be filled up out of the male members, with the approbation of the Presbytery.

When my grandfather had finished the reading of the deed, he handed it back to Mr. Chapman, and said to him, in a loud tone of voice, " My dear friend, I am certainly no lawyer ; but if Tom Farmer should feel disposed to file a bill in Chancery on behalf of the poor heir of Miss Timmings, who is, you know, now residing in the workhouse, to obtain possession of this property, I do not know how you could resist him."

" Don't speak so loud, Mr. Rawston—I implore you not to speak so loud. Why, walls have ears ; and this is not the first time I have thought of the expediency of getting that poor fellow Timmings out of the workhouse, and procuring employment for him in some remote part of the country. The fact is, I am very uneasy about this matter, Mr. Rawston, and our difficulties seem to increase every hour. Oh, what would George Palmer give to know our embarrassments !"

“Are you sure he does *not* know them, Mr. Chapman, since Mr. Farmer has read the deed?”

“Ah, that’s very true, Mr. Rawston. What is to be done? Don’t you think we also had better employ a lawyer? There’s Mr. George Brooksbank, you know, who is devoted to our interests, and though he is a very young man, and has had but little experience, yet his zeal would make up for that defect; and, besides, he is in correspondence with the great dissenting lawyers of London, who would, no doubt, favour him with their aid.

“No, no,” Mr. Chapman, we want no lawyer. Firmness and decision can alone get us through—and the only aid we may require besides (except the expenditure of a little money, which I am prepared to do) may be that of Job Perkins.”

“Job Perkins, Mr. Rawston! what, the constable?”

“Exactly so, Mr. Chapman, for it is by no means improbable that Tom Farmer may wish to force *his* way into our church-meeting on Friday; and should *that* be the case, we must prepare to resist him by legal force.”

“Oh, you think of *every thing*, Mr. Raw-

ston. I never met with such a man in all my life. Well then, will *you* speak to Job Perkins, or shall I?"

"You need not trouble yourself about that, Mr. Chapman. Job Perkins and I are old acquaintances: he will understand me in a minute. All you have now to do is to visit the church members, call on the four people whose arrears of rent you paid, and prepare your address for Friday evening. You will want money, Mr. Chapman; take these five guineas, and when they are gone, I am here, you know."

But it was now *one* o'clock, and as my grandfather dined very often at that early hour, he did so on this very Monday; and Mr. Chapman partook of a roast goose and brandy and water with an appetite and a relish, by no means diminished by the past three hours' conversation. As soon as the dinner was over and the cloth removed, the pipes were of course introduced; but at three o'clock the smoking was terminated, and Mr. Chapman sallied forth to canvass his members, whilst my grandfather returned to his counting-house and broad-cloth. Scarcely, however, had he commenced his duties, when a young

man with pale face, red hair, looking shabby-genteel, and about nineteen years of age, entered the counting-house.

"Is your name Mr. Rawston?" asked the youth.

"Why?" replied my grandfather.

"Because I want to speak to him," retorted the red-haired lad.

"Then speak on," said my grandfather.

"I am clerk to Mr. Farmer, the solicitor," said the lad.

"Are you indeed?" said my grandfather.

"And I have come to serve a notice upon you, Sir, by his directions."

"Serve away," said my grandfather.

So the red-haired clerk did as he had been told to do: he gave one paper, consisting of half a side of foolscap, with a vast deal of writing on it, to my grandfather, and showed him another paper, evidently signed by the parties for whom the notice was given, and which the clerk called "the original."

"Good day, Sir," said the clerk.

"Oh, good day, young man," responded my grandfather; and then placing the "*notice*" on the desk before which he was standing, read as follows:—

“ TO MR. JAMES RAWSTON,

“ Senior Deacon, or claiming to be such, of a

“ Certain chapel, or meeting-house, called the

“ Presbyterian, or Independent chapel, or meeting-house,

“ Under the Pastoral care of the Rev. James Chapman.”

“ We hereby give you notice to produce, or cause to be produced, at and in the vestry of the said chapel or meeting-house, at a meeting of the members of the church to be held therein on Friday evening next, at half-past Six precisely, a certain Requisition signed by us, and delivered on Sunday last by one of us, George Palmer, to Jesse Piper, the clerk of the said chapel or meeting-house, to be delivered by him to the said James Chapman, for the purpose of being read aloud to the church and congregation then assembled, and which said Requisition was in the words and figures following (that is to say) :—

(Here followed a copy of the Requisition, as delivered to Jesse Piper.)

“ And which said Requisition, you the said James Rawston did then and there illegally and unwarrantably take from the said Jesse Piper, and did place in your pocket, contrary to the intentions of us, members of the said chapel or meeting-house, and to our manifest injury. Witness our hands, &c. &c. &c.”

(Signed by George Palmer,

and the four other refractory members.)

“ This is making work for the lawyers with a vengeance,” muttered my grandfather to himself, as he placed the notice in his pocket-book ; “ I had no idea that George Palmer had so much money to spare ; but if he thinks to

intimidate *me*, he is mistaken, and he ought to know it."

The afternoon went off quietly enough, and my grandfather was about to retire at an earlier hour than usual to rest, when in walked Mr. Chapman. He had just received another notice, and the lawyer's red-haired youth had been prowling about all the afternoon opposite Mr. Chapman's residence, to see when he should enter, *and serve it upon him*, for Mr. Chapman had been busily occupied in canvassing his members. The notice served on Mr. Chapman was more comprehensive. It required him to produce to the meeting aforesaid, not only the trust-deed and the minute book of the Church, but likewise the protest, signed by the five schismatics, against the election of Mr. Rawston to the post of senior deacon, and which he had burnt.

Poor Mr. Chapman was in a wretched state of agitation, provocation, and botheration, and would have given all he was worth in this world, to have been some country curate in a country parish, "unknown to song," rather than the *Independent* minister of this *Presbyterian* chapel. My grandfather, somewhat consoled him by informing him, that he *also*

had received a notice, and by assuring him that those pieces of paper were simply so many ingenious contrivances of Tom Farmer, the antinomian lawyer, to gain his six and eight-pence's, and to make out a plausible case for his clients to the church-meeting. It was evident to my grandfather, that Mr. Farmer intended to seek at least to be present at the meeting in question, and that he had looked at the trust-deed, amongst other reasons, to see if any regulations had been laid down respecting the manner of holding such assemblies.

Mr. Chapman reported to the senior deacon the results of his afternoon and evening visits. On the whole, they had been satisfactory; but the old maiden lady, in pew No. 36, he had found "contaminated," and William Scales, Samuel Stow, Anne Wright, and Jacob Wheeler, had all individually declared that they considered the money as "*given*" by Mr. Rawston, and not "lent" to pay the arrears of rent they owed on the eve of his election as senior deacon, to their respective landlords. So "notes of hand" were quite out of the question, but all had promised (except Anne Wright) to attend and vote for the suspension or exclusion of the refractory delinquents.

Anne Wright could not do this, since George Palmer employed her as his washerwoman; but she agreed to stop away, and go into the country to see a sick daughter of hers, who was married and absent, so that neither her evidence nor her presence could be procured. "This was the most she could do," she said, "unless indeed Mrs. Rawston (my grandmother) " would give her all her washing, and which, though Mr. Rawston," she added, " was senior deacon at the *Independency* chapel, Mrs. Rawston (cruel injustice) continued to give to the Episcopacy laundress, Mrs. Brown, just as she formerly did, when a regular attendant at Saint Mary's Church."

"Then let her go and see her sick daughter," said my grandfather, "for if I employ her as laundress, they will accuse me, I suppose, of double bribery: and her absence may be more useful than her vote."

With respect to the canvass of the church members, some thought that Mr. Chapman had been rather hasty in suppressing the Requisition of the refractory schismatics; and others that he had no *right* alone to convene a special meeting of the church itself, "*to take into consideration the propriety of reprimanding, sus-*

pending, or expelling” the members aforesaid, but should have first spoken to them in private, then admonished them in company with and before the deacons, and finally have brought their conduct before the church.

Mr. Chapman, who knew perfectly well that the Independent dissenters had no sort of rules, either established or customary, about these matters, felt fully prepared to defend his proposition, that he had as much an independent right to do as he pleased, and to establish his own precedents for future pastors, as any of his predecessors had the right of doing so for theirs; and as he was not accountable to any one but himself and his own individual judgment and will, he did not feel at all anxious upon this point.

After half-an-hour's conversation, one pipe, and a glass of elder wine, Mr. Chapman took leave, promising to call the next evening to render an account of his second day's canvass.

George Palmer was not to be thus easily defeated. He had been informed of the canvass of Mr. Chapman; and though he could not hope to succeed with the *aristocracy* of the congregation, such as the lawyer, doctor, chemist, surveyor, woollen draper, bookseller,

cabinet maker, or dyer, he determined to try his hand with the baker, butcher, greengrocer, servants, and farming men. In one of these houses, that of Mr. William Shepherd, the baker, the culpable George Palmer entered as the Independent minister was leaving his shop.

“You are a bad man,” said Mr. Chapman.

“You are an unfaithful pastor,” said George Palmer.

“You are a schismatic,” said Mr. Chapman.

“You are a lover of the *loaves* and fishes,” said George Palmer.

This was too much for the baker to hear without emotion, and so rushing from behind his counter to the shop door, at the sound of the word “*loaves*,” he begged them both to enter.

At such a proposition as this, Mr. Chapman became indignant, and asked the honest baker “how he could suppose he would condescend to meet *that* man (pointing to George Palmer) in any private society.”

“You *will* meet me on Friday though, before your betters,” replied the far-gone schismatic; and Mr. Chapman turned on his heel and refused to hold further converse with *such* an offender.

Mr. Chapman was sometimes strangely perplexed with his "*Independency*;" and he was so after this interview. "Why, an Episcopalian layman would not *dare* thus to insult *his* clergyman," thought Mr. Chapman. "There is too much of what is termed liberty in our *Independent* churches. And yet we have no redress, and can do nothing but *appear before our betters*, as he styled them, our church members!" With such reflections poor Mr. Chapman pursued his canvass, but they haunted him the rest of the day.

In the evening, according to promise, he revisited the *senior* deacon, and this time my grandfather had invited Mr. Mott, the junior deacon, to meet him, as well as the attorney and his lady, the doctor and his wife, and the surveyor and his two daughters. The hour fixed upon was six, not for dinner, but for tea—rather a *late* hour, I admit, for a true dissenting tea party. At six to a moment all arrived, and a few minutes afterwards, Mr. and Mrs. Chapman. All the ladies wore caps, except the daughters of the surveyor, and slate or dove coloured silk gowns were all their toilettes. There was plenty of tea, and an abundance of muffins, toast both dry and hot, cakes, ham,

and crumpets ; and if this Independent tea society had not eaten either dinner or breakfast for a week past, they could not have done more justice than they did to my grandfather's hospitality. During tea-time the conversation turned on miscellaneous subjects, such as "the preposterous conduct of the rector in refusing to subscribe to a piece of plate to be presented to a *whig* member of parliament for the county" — "the extravagant manner in which Miss Harding dressed, who had just opened a dissenting school in the town, she belonging to the Baptists" — "what Mr. M'Kenzie was said to have said of Mr. Chapman at a tea party, said to have been given to the Presbyterian leaders a few evenings previously, on occasion of a visit of Mr. M'Kerrow, *viz.* that he Mr. Chapman *had usurped a throne that did not belong to him*" — and finally, about "the great falling off in the attendance at the Baptist congregation on a Sunday evening," at which Mr. Chapman pricked up his ears with evident feelings of satisfaction and encouragement. "Well, there is no falling off in *OUR* Sunday evening attendance," said the wife of the lawyer, and all the other ladies said "NO INDEED," with so

much emphasis, that Mr. Chapman forgot for the moment his approaching church meeting.

It was the custom in my grandfather's time, as it is now, even in the *upper* walks of dissenting provincial society, for the "gentlemen" to smoke before the ladies, those ladies always declaring, with more or less sincerity, "that they quite enjoy it." So pipes, spittoons, brandy, rum, and gin and water, cakes, oranges, and conversation cards were soon placed on the table, and the gentlemen prepared for *their* "dish of scandal."

"Well, my dear friend," said my grandfather, turning to Mr. Chapman, "and what has been the result of your pastoral visits to-day among *our* friends?"

"Why, that I have met George Palmer canvassing."

"Oh, the horror!" cried the doctor's wife.

"Oh, the creature!" exclaimed the lawyer's lady.

"Did you indeed?" asked Mrs. Rawston; "and what did he say for himself?"

The surveyor's daughters could not express *their* indignation, but Mary looked at Sarah, and Sarah at Mary, and both at Mr. Chapman,

when one said, "It's really too bad, isn't it, Pa?" and the other said, "Ah, he will live to repent it."

So Mr. Chapman recounted, but with very few embellishments, all that had transpired, and Mr. Rawston said, "*That* George Palmer is a very bad and unworthy fellow."

The greater part of the evening was spent in debating what was best to be *done*, and the event which excited the most painful impressions on the minds of the ladies was the *burning of the protest*. They had such *awful* notions about "*protests*," that they looked upon burning a protest as a sort of incendiarism. The young lawyer thought that this was the worst feature "*in our case*," for already he had adopted it as his own, and recommended that a notice should be served on each of the five refractory delinquents, informing them, in the names of the pastor and two deacons, that no persons would be allowed to attend the meeting on Friday next but the members. This, he said, was only a precautionary measure, but that it would make very much for their cause if a riot should take place in consequence of the attempts of Tom Farmer, or any one else, to force his way into the assembly. The

doctor, surveyor, and Mr. Chapman were unanimous in approving the suggestion ; and though my grandfather thought, as did the junior deacon, that perhaps the proposed notices would "*put it into the heads*" of the refractory members to bring their lawyer with them, yet they did not insist on the objection, and Mr. Brooksbank took orders for the job. So the next day he entered in his day-book the cause of "*Rawston and others against Palmer and others,*" with all the necessary accompaniments of "attending a meeting at Mr. Rawston's, &c., &c.;" then "Instructions for notices," "Copies of notices," "Services respectively on them, &c., &c., &c.;" and if my grandfather had even asked for the bill the next day, three golden guineas would not have covered the expense.

The *tea* party was not only profitable to the young lawyer, but also to "*the cause,*" for the dissenting poulterer who had been "wavering as to the line of conduct he should pursue," had been so convinced by the purchase of fowls, giblets, and other good things from his shop by Mrs. Rawston, for the supper that evening, that Mr. Rawston must be upheld "in his rights and privileges," that he promised his

“silent vote, if that would be of any good, on next Friday,” for the poulterer also was a member. A good deal of smoking, a proper quantity of drinking, a very great allowance of eating, and five-and-a-half hours of scandal, were the *principal* occupations of the evening; though a solitary quarter of an hour was allotted to family worship, and about the same length of time to what the doctor’s wife called “*dear innocent English songs,*” sung by the two daughters of the surveyor.

The next day was Wednesday. Mr. Chapman began his visits to the “*democracy,*” and there he found that George Palmer had been before him. He had convinced a great many of them that this was “an insolent attempt on the part of Mr. Rawston, because he was richer than they, to outvote them by his gold and silver; and that Mr. Chapman had fallen down himself to the golden calf.” They had nearly all the same phrase, and Mr. Chapman could not help telling two or three of them, “that they had learnt well their lesson.” The rallying word with George Palmer was “*Down with the Aristocrats!*” and though his adherents knew not how either to spell, write, or pronounce the word, still “*cats*” and “*rats*”

they all said fearlessly ; but hurrying or stumbling over the first part of the word, some saying, "*hurristocats*," others "*rusty cats*," and many more "*hairy cats*."

I have already pointed out the rank and character of the dissenting aristocracy at the epoch of which I am writing ; since that period the love of power, the itch of governing, the spirit of schism, the hatred of subordination, and the habit of carrying what was styled "the right of private judgment," to a fearful and preposterous extent, have gained what I may call the upper middling classes of society. The dissenting *aristocracy* now consists of retired tradesmen, small manufacturers (and even a few very large ones), lawyers in abundance (though but very few barristers), some medical men yclept surgeons (but not five men of decided eminence), here and there a private gentleman, and occasionally a large farmer. But the nobility, the gentry, the large landed proprietors, the gentlemen farmers, even the mass of respectable farmers, large manufacturers, and wholesale dealers are Churchmen. Merchants indeed are much divided, and within the last thirty years the dissenters at Bristol, Liverpool, London, and a few other places,

have added many to their numbers. Thus nearly all the education, talent, science, hereditary rank, and family worth, are enlisted on the side of the Church ; whilst here and there such men as the late Olinthus Gregory and as Serjeant Talfourd are dissenters.

The dissenters of late years, since they have had some half-dozen representatives in parliament, out of more than six hundred, have talked largely indeed about “ their *rank, wealth, and talent* ; ” but though these phrases sound pleasantly to dissenting ears from the platforms of their associations, the truth is entirely opposed to such statements ; even the Wesleyan Methodists, who have more of wealthy men amongst them (as the lists of subscribers to their centenary festival abundantly prove), than all the regular dissenters put together, apply to members of the Church of England to preside at the annual meetings of their Missionary Society ; whilst the “ Protestant Society ” uniformly places in the chair at its anniversaries, men such as the Duke of Sussex, Lord John Russell, Earl Grey, and the Marquis of Tavistock, who at least affect to belong to the Church of England. No—the aristocracy of the country is yet with the Church, and that

not merely the aristocracy of family and blood, but of learning, talent, science, and virtue. But to return to my grandfather.

George Palmer so contrived to mystify several of the poor members of Mr. Chapman's Independent meeting by the words "aristocracy" and "democracy," that the pastor found it no easy task to undeceive them; and when he had finished his canvass on Wednesday night, he counted twenty-four (including the five protesters) on whom he felt he could not place the least reliance.

"Now this is schism," said Mr. Chapman to his wife, as he went through the list of members and marked down their replies.

"So then, my dear," replied his lady, "our rector's sermon ON THE SIN AND DANGER OF SCHISM, was not quite so 'SILLY' as you maintained it was when published; for if there may be schism in our dissenting churches, there may certainly be schism against the national religion; I think, my dear, the observation of our excellent friend Mr. Rutter was not a bad one, when he said, "that when the gospel was preached in its purity, the prayers read with fervour, and the sacraments administered with unction in the Church of England, those who

got up a cabal against such a church and such a clergy, were schismatics.”

“I cannot go so far as that,” said Mr. Chapman, “my dear Mary, but I feel now in my own experience that there is such a thing as SCHISM, though I cannot define it. But let us walk to Mr. Rawston’s, and see what he says to-night. He will want to know how we stand as to numbers.”

When Mr. and Mrs. Chapman entered my grandfather’s back parlour, they found him closetted with my grandmother and *Job Perkins*. Job eyed the intruders with the knowing look, which all sorts of policemen, in all countries, always either feel or feign, on similar occasions.

“Then I’ll call again to-morrow,” said Job, making at once an upward and a sideward movement towards the door.

“I’m afraid we’re disturbing you,” said Mr. Chapman almost simultaneously—and took a retreating step.

“No, no—not at all, not at all,” said my grandfather. “Job, this is the Rev. Mr. Chapman, our minister; Mr. Chapman, this is my good friend, Mr. Job Perkins.”

“Ah! indeed—indeed,” said Mr. Chapman,

“I am most happy to see you, Sir; such men as *you* are the faithful guardians of the peace of society. It is a lamentable thing that society is so bad as to need such helps to the preservation of its peace; but honour to whom honour is due; eh, Mr. Perkins?”

Mr. Perkins understood very little about the state of society, or any dissenting philosophy; but he knew from more quarters than one that a bit of a disturbance was expected at the vestry of the chapel next Friday, and Mr. Rawston was giving him directions how he should act.

The *geography* of the meeting-house, and especially of the vestry-room, was decidedly favourable to a resistance to the dissenting schismatics, in case any attempt should be made by them to obtain the admission by “*ruse*” of improper persons; for the chapel stood at the corner of a lane; the Sunday-school door opened into the lane; and the vestry was situate between the chapel and the school-room. On ordinary occasions, when there was but a small attendance of church members, and when the affairs of the meeting went on pacifically, the chapel front-door was opened, a solitary lamp was lighted just to enable the church members to grope their way

to the vestry door, and the school-room in the lane was shut altogether. But my grandfather, who was an admirable manager, saw that if this mode of admission should be adopted on the present occasion, a brawl in the chapel might be reasonably apprehended, and that, as he was *senior* deacon, all the blame would be laid at his door. There was likewise another objection. It would be easy for persons to enter the chapel, and then insist on entering the vestry-room, who were not members ; or even to hold an opposition meeting in the chapel, whilst the regular church-meeting was assembled in the ordinary place of convocation. He decided, therefore, that the only door to be opened should be the school-room door in the lane ; that a Sunday-school-boy (some sharp, clever lad) should be stationed at the front-door of the chapel, to inform all who came that they must turn round the corner ; to have Jesse Piper, the clerk, placed at the outside of the door in the lane, to open it to all such as should apply for admission and were really members ; and, finally, to leave Job Perkins, the constable, in the school-room, to take into custody any one, not a member, who should dare to force his way into the school-room without the clerk's per-

mission, with a view of attending the meeting aforesaid.

Job Perkins approved entirely of all these arrangements, and merely suggested that a fire should be made in the school-room stove, and that the room should be well lighted, in case of any attempt at confusion, so that the parties might be clearly seen; and that a can of beer should be supplied him, since he ought to be there at least an hour before the time, and might have to remain till midnight. All these requests were considered as most moderate; and my grandfather assured him, that "all should be comfortable and in order." So Job Perkins took his leave, after drinking "*success to the cause;*" and Mr. and Mrs. Rawston and Mr. and Mrs. Chapman were unanimous in assuring him "*that he was a very good fellow.*"

As soon as the constable had left, Mr. Chapman related to my grandfather all the proceedings of the day, and then supplied him with a "*resumé*" of the canvass. On the whole, it was satisfactory; though the number of the malcontents was greater than the head deacon had expected.

The next day was Thursday. It was the regular chapel night; and as Mr. Chapman

had to prepare, first his address for that night “on the sin and danger of disturbing the peace of the church,” and as he had likewise to prepare his address for Friday evening, he took leave, immediately after supper and “one pipe,” of my grandfather, in order, as he said, “that he might have a good night’s rest, and be prepared and fresh for the morning.”

Mr. Chapman took for his text the 10th verse of the 1st chapter of the 1st Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians: “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no division among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.”

The chapel was by no means full, as all the malcontents absented themselves, and as the weather was particularly unfavourable. The sermon was tolerably good, and those who were the friends of Mr. Rawston and the minister, declared it “*perfect*.” But it was evident that the majority were disappointed at the non-attendance, on this Thursday evening, of the Palmer party, and paid less attention to the sermon in consequence. The “broad hints” of Mr. Chapman to schismatics they could not

apply to themselves, as they were either favourable to Mr. Chapman's views, or, as merely hearers at the meeting-house and not members, were consequently very indirectly interested in the matter; but they were disappointed in their previously conceived hopes of looking at George Palmer and his confederates, and seeing them wince and wriggle, look angry and dissatisfied, at what was said. A very few Christian people sighed to hear no more about the matter, and hoped the faction would remain away always; but these were a few descendants of the former Presbyterians, and not the modern Independents.

The long-expected Friday at length arrived. The morning was passed by my grandfather and Mr. Chapman in the exchanging of little *confidential* notes, in which various details as to the operations of the coming evening were arranged, and suggestions given respecting sundry measures to be taken in the event of certain contingencies. By one o'clock all these arrangements were terminated, and at four precisely my grandfather and the junior deacon met at the house of Mr. Chapman, to take "an early tea," preparatory to the meeting at half-past six. Mr. Mott, the junior deacon,

exhibited some uneasiness and anxiety. He was a plumber and glazier. He lived, as he justly observed, by his trade, and depended almost entirely on the custom of those who frequented the chapel. He was not, he said, like Mr. Rawston, wholly independent, as to worldly affairs, of the congregation; and if there should be a split in the church, it might be very prejudicial to his business. For *his* part, he added, rather significantly, he thought it would have been much the best way if the old order of things had not been turned “topsy-turvy” by the election of a *senior* deacon, in the place of a *junior* regularly advancing to that post, and a junior one being elected in *his* stead; but of course he protested he did not say this from any jealous or personal feeling—*quite the contrary*; but that the peace of the church had been very much disturbed by these encroachments.—This was the substance of Mr. Mott’s observations; but as he had a very hesitating manner, amounting to something like stammering, and possessed a far better knowledge of the plumbing business than he did of the English language, I do not pretend to have reported *verbatim* his by no means agreeable harangue.

My grandfather was silent; he left Mr. Chapman to reply to his *junior* deacon—and the pastor was not backward in doing so. He reminded Mr. Mott that this was not the *first* time that a similar circumstance had occurred: for that a former *senior* deacon, Mr. Money-penny, had been chosen in a similar manner during the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Hawkins; and then, as a conclusive argument, he observed, “Besides, Mr. Mott, you know, if you would stick to rules, a trustee ought not to be a deacon; and yet I have pledged myself to you, whenever a vacancy shall occur, to support your candidateship for the post of trustee, though you will remain a deacon.”

This *argumentum ad hominem* was quite unanswerable; and Mr. Mott got out of his difficulty by saying, “That he had *merely* made the observation”—a very common but perfectly incomprehensible reply made by persons who feel they are in “a scrape,” and yet know not how to get out of it without compromising their dignity.

At five o'clock the “early tea” was over, and one loud knock at Mr. Chapman's door was followed by the entry of Job Perkins. The worthy constable was ushered in, invited to

take a glass of rum and water, to which no objection was made by this defender of the public peace, and after two or three coughs, and half-a-dozen hems, Mr. Perkins spoke as follows :—

“ If I may be so bold, Mr. Rawston, as to make an observation, I have been thinking over this here business, and it strikes me as how, that from all I can collect of the state of affairs, that Master Farmer and some of his young 'uns may make a desperate attack upon us, and that it wouldn't be amiss if I had an auxiliary, as it were; for a man is but a man, you know, and Jesse Piper is no lion at any rate.”

The English of this was, that as Job Perkins thought the job in which he was engaged a good one, he felt a desire to introduce to it his son-in-law, who could also earn a few shillings as a special constable. As Job Perkins had to supply all the valour for the meeting, and as Jesse Piper was known to be particularly averse to any thing like personal collision in the shape of boxing, the two deacons and the minister acquiesced in the suggestion; and as Job had taken the precaution of bringing his son-in-law with him, though he left him for form sake at the door, he was invited in, supplied with the same

refreshment as his father : and at half-past five precisely, Mr. Chapman, the two deacons, the two constables, and the clerk, proceeded to the chapel, placed a sharp, active lad, a son of one of the well-known partisans of Mr. Chapman, at the front-door, to send all the members to the school-room door in the lane, and then entered the school-room and vestry-room ; and whilst Jesse Piper made the fires, the rest were occupied in placing the stools, chairs, forms, and benches in such a manner as to resist all attacks with the utmost promptitude and decision. Jesse Piper was then sent for the “ can of beer ” promised to Job Perkins ; and the candles having been lighted, and the lamps set twinkling, as the meeting-house clock struck *six*, Jesse Piper was placed outside the school-room door, and the two constables guarded the interior, whilst the minister and the two deacons were in the vestry waiting for the arrival of both friends and foes.

At ten minutes past six the members began to arrive. The females were the most early. They “ wished to see and hear all.” Some looked at the minister and the deacons as if they were great culprits, who were about to be put on their trial. Others cast a melancholy

glance at them, pitying them for their unmerited persecutions; whilst others, like cross old Mrs. Templetown, looked truly independent, and as though her very starched gown would declare, "I am perfectly impartial, and am resolved to show no favour to either party." There was another old lady, named Turnley, who also viewed with a cold and immoveable countenance the gathering clouds, and spoke with the same apparent indifference to both factions.

The vestry-room, which was much larger than are usually those attached to dissenting meetings, was rapidly filling, when about twenty-three minutes past six a noise was heard from without; and Job Perkins was heard to say, in no very dulcet notes,

"*Mr. Farmer, Sir*, I must do my duty. If you do not leave this room immediately, I must take you into custody."

"Why, that's the voice of Job Perkins," said Mrs. Templetown. "I should know it from a thousand others, it is so shrill and disagreeable. Pray, Mr. Chapman, what business has Perkins there?"

"To keep the peace, Mrs. Templetown."

"Why, who is going to disturb it, Mr. Chapman?"

"If you listen you will hear, Madam," replied the minister, resolved in putting down, by his tone and manner, all attempts at insubordination *within* the vestry, as he had determined also to do *without*.

She had not, however, to wait long—for Mr. Farmer, the lawyer, replied with a stentorian voice, "Job Perkins, I've a great respect for you ; but if you put your hands on me, I'll bring an action against you for an assault."

"Action, or no action," said Job, "it matters not to me, Mr. Farmer ; you've no business in this chapel or its appurtenances, and if you don't walk out without any more parleying, I'll lock you up."

At this moment the knocking outside the school-room door became violent—Jesse Piper, the clerk, had absconded from his post through downright fear ; fifteen of the malcontents had marched down in a body, with Mr. Farmer at their head, who alone, however, had slipped by Jesse and obtained admission to the school-room, forcing the latch and rushing in ; but Job Perkins and his son-in-law had slammed the door in the faces of the rest of the belligerents, and bolted the inner bolt. It was against

this exclusion that Messrs. George, Palmer, and Co., were now so violently protesting.

Mrs. Templetown and Mrs. Turnley left their seats in the vestry, "to see what *was* the matter;" and two persons, disposed to be friendly to George Palmer, who were in the vestry-room, called "Shame, shame!"

"You may well call shame!" said Mr. Chapman; "such conduct as this is the best argument that could possibly be offered in favour of the *exclusion* of these bad people from our church. They are a disgrace to our body."

"There's not a pin to choose," growled a very cross, peevish old man, who belonged to the "*impartial party*."

"What did you say, Mr. Wright?" asked Mr. Chapman. Mr. Wright gave no reply; and if he had, at this moment it would have been difficult to have heard it; for Mr. Farmer was resisting the attempt of Job Perkins and his son-in-law to take him into custody; whilst the malcontents without were thundering with both legs and hands against the crazy old door of the besieged school-room.

"Help! help!" cried Job Perkins, and as this was the signal arranged before-hand, at which, on it being given, the minister and the

two deacons were to proceed to the school-room, they left the vestry and rushed in thither.

"In the name of the king," said Job, "I call upon you to help me in keeping the king's peace."

"You'll answer for this, Mr. Rawston," exclaimed Tom Farmer, who was in the unenviable position of being between two constables. "This is the way you conduct the affairs of the meeting. If I spend the last shilling I have in the world, I'll bring you up to the assizes for this."

My grandfather made no reply.

"Just open the door half-way, gentlemen," said Job Perkins to the minister and the two deacons, "only wide enough for us to take Mr. Farmer away to the cage until he shall have given securities before a magistrate to appear at the next quarter sessions for a riot, and for assaulting us in the discharge of our duty." This was no very easy task, for George Palmer and his agents had frightened away Jesse Piper; and the respectable portion of the members, who had not already entered, stood aloof from the crowd, resolved, though it was dark and cold, not to attempt to go into the school-room until this scuffle should be terminated.

“Rescue him ! rescue him !” cried George Palmer as the door gently opened, and as Mr. Palmer advanced between the two constables.

“No, no, Mr. Palmer,” exclaimed the lawyer, “no rescue, no rescue ; I *will* go to the cage—and they shall pay dearly for it. We’ll teach the *senior* deacon what it is to turn dissenter because the church wouldn’t have him for churchwarden.”

“We *will*, indeed !” shouted George Palmer—“but what shall we do now, Mr. Farmer ?”

“Attend the meeting and protest against its illegality, and then withdraw ; take no part in the proceedings—mind that :”—and then, calling to his two articulated and one unarticled clerks, he said, “Williams, Simpson, and Harris, come with me—any further attempt to assert the rights of my clients is unnecessary.”

George Palmer now returned to the school-room door, accompanied by his female and male adherents, and they were admitted one by one by the two deacons, who had stationed themselves outside that door with a lanthorn, to examine the features of each person claiming to enter. In a little more than a quarter of an

hour all the applicants had been disposed of, and such a muster of church members had not been seen since one remarkable night in the past history of this *Independent* church, when the malcontents had taken possession of the pulpit, and had excluded the last Presbyterian minister by mere physical force, to put in his place the *first* of the race of *Independents*.

The vestry-room was now full. The school-room door was bolted. The two constables had returned from placing Tom Farmer in the cage, and had been re-admitted into the school-room—and amidst a din of voices and confusion, almost unparalleled even by the more modern riots at “Wolverhampton” and “The Tabernacle,” Mr. Chapman attempted to give out a *hymn*.

This was the signal for PROTESTING on the part of “George Palmer,” who, ascending a chair, surrounded by Sarah Marshall, Betsy Smallgrass, Nathaniel Blackmann, and Jabez Whittle, spoke as follows:—

“Brethren and Sisters, I come here to discharge a great public duty.”

[Cries of “*No! no!*” from Mr. Chapman and the two deacons, and of “*Yes! yes!*” from the four persons surrounding his chair.]

Mr. Chapman. Rather say, to disturb the church, ruin the cause of Independency in this town, and give occasion to the enemies of dissent to rejoice.

George Palmer. No—it is you who are the aggressors. You have stifled the voice of the people; perverted the minds of the members—

[Cries of “*No ! no !*” from Mrs. Templeton and Mrs. Turnley, who objected to it being supposed that they were *perverted*.]

George Palmer. Violated the trusts of the chapel——

[“That’s false,” said some one in an under tone—it was the voice of the young dissenting lawyer.]

George Palmer. I repeat it — violated the trusts of the chapel—illegally elected a would-be disappointed churchwarden to the post of *senior* deacon, put the Church of England over the heads of the *real* dissenters, suppressed a protest; and I have heard, though that would be too monstrous to be believed, BURNT IT.

Mr. Chapman. Yes, burnt it—and I would burn a thousand such, if sent me.

George Palmer. There, sisters and brethren, you hear that—burnt the protest.

Sarah Marshall. Is it possible, Mr. Chapman, you could have done that?

Mr. Chapman. Yes, Mrs. Marshall — quite possible.

George Palmer. Suppressed our requisition for a meeting of the church.

Mrs. Templetown. What requisition, George?

George Palmer. Why, a requisition signed, Mrs. Templetown, by five members of this church, and placed in the hands of Jesse Piper to hand to Mr. Chapman to give out last Sunday morning.

Mrs. Turnley. Who suppressed it?

George Palmer. Why, the *senior* deacon.

The Senior Deacon. As insulting to our beloved pastor, and as an attempt to introduce disorder and anarchy into this church and congregation.

Jabez Whittle. And who made you an exclusive judge of that, Mr. *Senior* Deacon?

My grandfather made no reply.

Mrs. Templetown. Why don't you reply, Mr. Rawston?

The Senior Deacon. Because the tone and manner of the inquiry did not entitle it to an answer. [For, though my grandfather had be-

come an Independent, he still retained some of his episcopal good manners and dignity.]

George Palmer. And finally, sisters and brethren, they have called this church-meeting without any requisition, and have convoked you to pass sentence of censure, suspension, or expulsion, against members whose names or offences were not specified. *They*, I say, have dared to do all this, without giving their names.

Mr. Chapman. That is incorrect, to say the least of it, for *George Palmer* knows that it was I who convened this meeting; and as the minister of this Independent church and congregation, I had the right so to do.

George Palmer. *Mr. Palmer*, I will thank you to call me, James Chapman, and *not George Palmer*.

Mr. Chapman. Well, *Mr. Palmer*, I am responsible for convoking this meeting, and the conduct of yourself and your myrmidons this evening, in the school-room and outside, must have convinced every one that I did *wisely* when I exercised this right as I have done.

George Palmer. You have no such right. You have no right at all; you are here by sufferance. The trustees could turn you out to-

morrow at the request of this church, and I do not despair of seeing you deprived of your office.

[Cries of "*Shame! shame!*" on the part of the two daughters of the surveyor, the apothecary's wife, the lawyer's wife, and several other female friends of Mr. Chapman.]

George Palmer. Rather cry, "shame" at the disgraceful conduct of your gold-worshipping minister, who has sold his conscience to that man there (pointing to my grandfather), and bought the votes of you, William Scales, Samuel Stow, and Jacob Wheeler, as well as your co-conspirator, Anne Wright (who is kept out of the way), by paying all your arrears of rent to your landlords.

[Cries from Roberts, Trowbridge, and Manton, the three members whom my grandfather had promised to influence to attend—" *And very generous, too!*" " *Would you have paid them?*" " *Rawston for ever!*"]

George Palmer. There, brother members—do you hear those cries? There's corruption, illegality, bribery, perjury.

The Dissenting Lawyer. I shall take down your words, *Mr. Palmer*, and you will hear of them on a future occasion.

George Palmer. I'm indifferent to your threats, young *latitat*; I am come here to perform an arduous, though a painful duty.

[Cries of "You have," "You have," "*You are a true Independent*," from Sarah Marshall, Betsy Smallgrass, Nathaniel Blackmann, and Jabez Whittle.]

George Palmer. And I will never yield till I see the *rights* of all the members, yes, the very humblest members, of this Christian church fully restored to them.

Betsy Smallgrass. And we'll spend our last shilling, George, in such a struggle.

[Cries from Roberts, Trowbridge, and Manton, "That will soon be spent; the struggle won't last long at that rate."]

Sarah Marshall. Insolent creatures, do you call yourselves Christians to laugh at her poverty?

George Palmer. My purse is certainly not as large as the *senior* deacon's, but the Attorney-general's is; and poor old Timmings in the workhouse may one day be his client.

Mrs. Templetown. What have we to do with old Timmings, Mr. Palmer?

George Palmer. Mrs. Templetown, he is the

rightful heir to the property, as the trusts of this chapel have all been violated. We have taken legal advice.

Mrs. Turnley. What do you mean, Mr. Palmer, by violating the trusts? we have a right to ask you as a fellow-member.

George Palmer. Why, is not this an *Independent* meeting now?

Mrs. Turnley. To be sure it is; and what then?

George Palmer. But who *made* it so? Not the founder, for she was a Presbyterian.

Mrs. Templetown. Then who did?

[Cries from Sarah Marshall and Betsy Smallgrass, of "*Yes, who did? who did?*"]

George Palmer. I will tell you who did. Men like this *senior* deacon, who coveted the loaves and fishes; and who turned out the regular Presbyterians to put in a parcel of "*anythingarians*," like Mr. Chapman and his followers. And—

[Loud cries of "*Shame! shame!*" now drowned the voice of the speaker; the deacons, minister, doctor and wife, lawyer and wife, surveyor and two daughters, three of the four persons whose arrears of rent had been paid, and Messrs.

Roberts, Trowbridge, and Manton, the "obliged ones" of my grandfather, being the most vociferous in their denunciations.]

"Yes, shame—shame," cried a well-known voice, sharp and shrill, as silence became somewhat restored. It was the voice of Jesse Piper. He had ventured at least to return to the school-room door, and after having been taunted for his cowardice by the two constables, and assured by Job Perkins, "that if *he* were the gentlemen managers of the chapel, he would turn off such a coward as him," had made up his mind to seek to retrieve his past errors by an exhibition of future courage.

"Yes, shame—shame,—George Palmer—look at my coat here that you have torn. Can I afford to buy new coats, do you think, in this way? I merely civilly asked you to tell Mr. Farmer to withdraw, and you laid hold of me like a lion, and would have torn me to pieces if I had not gone away. My life was in danger—and now you call us *ARIANS*."

[Loud cries of "*Yes, yes!*" from Roberts, Trowbridge, and Manton, and equally vehement shouts of "*No, no!*" from George Palmer's adherents.]

George Palmer. Poor, ignorant creature that

you are, Jesse ! I'm sorry you had your old coat torn ; but your wife can darn it again for you, as she has done the last twenty years. I did not say "*arians*," but "*anythingarians*."

Jesse Piper. Worse and worse, George. This is sad work indeed ; tear my coat, and then call me "anything" and an "arian." Call yourself an arian, George, and see how you'd like it. No—I'm an *Independent* to my backbone, every inch of me. A'nt I, Mr. Chapman?

There was a "*naïveté*," both of matter and manner, in all that proceeded from poor Jesse Piper, that even George Palmer could not be offended by him ; and so taking a shilling out of his pocket, "There, Jesse," he said, "that will mend your coat, won't it? You are nobody, you know, but Jesse the clerk, and my advice to you is to BE QUIET."

If George Palmer had simply given the shilling without his advice, it would have been willingly accepted by Jesse Piper, but the counsel offered him, "to be quiet," seemed to the Independent clerk to be intended as an attack on his *vocal* exercises and duties, if not a threat held out of depriving him of his post ; so Jesse screwed himself up to the sticking-point, and replied,

“ I’ll not take your shilling, *Mr. Palmer*. I’ll wear my coat to the end of my days, as a proof of my sufferings in the *Independent* cause; but though you wish me to BE QUIET, that you may have my place, I suppose, I’ll keep it in spite of you; and I know this *Independent* church will support me.”

[The cries of “*Bravo!*” which succeeded this most astounding act of independence and heroism on the part of poor Jesse can only be appreciated by those, who have had the misfortune to be present at some Independent meeting against tithes and church-rates.]

When these cries had subsided, and Mr. Chapman had a chance of being heard, he stood on his own arm-chair as president of this Independent church-meeting, and thus addressed the assembly: “ Friends and enemies, Christians and sinners, you who remain faithful to ‘*the cause*,’ and you who are seeking to destroy it, I have but a few words to address to you; I had intended to have spoken to you at considerable length, and, according to our custom, to have begun the meeting with singing and prayer; you, our enemies, have prevented this, but you will not prevent us *voting*.”

George Palmer. We will prevent you. The meeting is *illegal*. We *protest* against it. It has not been legally assembled. You, Mr. Chapman, had no right to call it. Let a meeting be legally convoked; and we will see: but this meeting is illegal.

[Cries of "Yes, it is illegal," proceeded from the well-known protesters. "*We will not stay to vote. We will not defend ourselves before this meeting.*"]

Mr. Chapman continued. This meeting is a *legal* one. I had the *right*, as the minister, to summon it. I have done so. You have met. All can be able to judge for themselves. The conduct of you, our enemies, this evening, has been before the eyes of all. *Mr. Friend* (the apothecary) has two resolutions to move, and upon which you will be called to vote.

George Palmer. You cannot move any resolutions; this is not a *legal* meeting. If you attempt to move them we will protest and retire. [Cries of "*Bravo, bravo!*" from his adherents.]

Mr. Chapman. I think, Christian friends, that we require no other proof of the spirit and temper of the people. I would rather lay my head on the block than submit to such schism and schismatics as this.

[Cries of "*And we will not submit*," from Roberts, Trowbridge, and Manton.]

The Apothecary. I rise, Sir—turning to Mr. Chapman—to move the following resolutions:—

George Palmer. You shall not read them.

The friends of Mr. Chapman. Read them, read them.

In vain, however, did the apothecary endeavour to be heard. The whole of the revolvers proceeded to stamp, scream, and *protest*, with so much of violence, that not one word of the resolutions in question could be made out by Mr. Chapman's party.

George Palmer. I move that this meeting, illegally convened by Mr. Chapman, *do adjourn*.

Betsy Smallgrass. I second the motion.

Sarah Marshall. I third it.

Nathaniel Blackmann. I fourth it.

Jabez Whittle. And I put it to the vote. As many as are of this opinion hold up your hands.

Sixteen hands in all were held up.

Jabez Whittle. And you, who are of the contrary opinion, hold up yours.

Mr. Chapman. Christian friends, *do not*

hold up your hands at all. Who made Jabez Whittle your president? Am not I? He is only one of the faction.

Jabez Whittle. And who made you, James Chapman, the *Independent* minister of a *Presbyterian* chapel? Christian friends, you who are opposed to this *illegal* meeting, hold up *your* hands. This does not pledge you to vote *for* us or *against* us, but merely to decide that this meeting shall or shall not adjourn.

Mr. Chapman. Do not vote, my friends. It is only a trap laid for you by Tom Farmer.

In spite, however, of this caution, some of the truly "Independent" members, such as Mrs. Templetown and Mrs. Turnley, held up their hands, not because they thought the meeting either legal or illegal, for they knew nothing about the matter, but simply to show that, "as for them, they were neither *priest-ridden*, nor *Palmer-ridden*, but independent." So seven persons held up their hands *against* the adjournment.

Jabez Whittle. Thus sixteen have voted to *adjourn* this illegal meeting, and seven *only* not to adjourn; *I declare the meeting adjourned.*

The Senior Deacon. You may as well de-

clare yourself the pastor, clerk, and congregation at once. You can as much do one as the other.

George Palmer. Christian friends, this *illegal* meeting is adjourned.

The Senior Deacon. Christian friends, this *legal* meeting will continue its deliberations; and proceed to hear, discuss, and vote on the resolutions now to be submitted to it.

George Palmer. The meeting is *adjourned*.

Jabez Whittle. The meeting is adjourned.

[Cries of "*Adjourned, adjourned*," from all the other truly Independent schismatics; and the whole of the sixteen left their chairs, forms, and benches, and opened the school-room door.]

George Palmer. Take care, Mrs. Templetown, they do not drag *you* into their nets.

Jabez Whittle. Let me advise *you*, Mrs. Turnley, how you listen to their falsehoods.

Job Perkins. Now, gem'men, if you're going, go, as the saying is, but none o' your disturbance in this here place, or you will find yourself where Tom Farmer is, in the cage for the night.

Betsy Smallgrass. Do you hear *that*, George Palmer? poor dear Mr. Farmer in the cage for the night.

George Palmer. Let those laugh who lose ; those will who win, Mrs. Smallgrass.

Job Perkins. Come gem'men, move on, move on ; no interruption of the public peace, if *you* please, or I may be obliged to show my authority.

George Palmer. Come, my friends, let us move off ; for people are known by the company they keep.

Jabez Whittle. And we have been in very indifferent society for the last two hours.

So all the malcontents reached the lane, except two, who remained as spies, and the school-room door was shut and bolted.

Job Perkins then opened the vestry-room door ; and raising his voice to something resembling a squeak, exclaimed—" They're all gone, Mr. Chairman, and gentlemen and ladies, and joy go with'em and sixpence, as the saying is," and he shut the door. The meeting, thus cleared of fourteen orators and rioters, for only two remained to listen and report, became much more calm, though the whole of " THE IMPARTIAL PARTY" (seven in number) stayed, and maintained, " that there were faults on both sides ;" and three Christian people, who desired that an attempt should be made at RECONCILIATION. " The IMPARTIAL party" was headed by Mrs.

Templetown; and the three real Christians were Mrs. MacIntyre, Mrs. Chalmers, and a Miss Fletcher, who, though of Scotch and Presbyterian origin, had remained faithful to this mixed or mongrel congregation, because within those walls they had first experienced the truth and power of the gospel.

“The CHAPMAN” party, for that was the title by which the friends of the minister and of my grandfather were now called, were thirty-six at the meeting, exclusive of the minister, his wife, and the two deacons and their wives. So that, in fact, the statistics of the factions were as follows :

Schismatics who had left the meeting	..	.	14
Schismatics who remained to watch and report	..		2
Impartialists	..	..	7
Chapmanists	..	..	42
True Christian peace-makers	..	..	3
		Total	68

As soon as order was restored, the minister took the chair; and the candles and lamps having been snuffed and trimmed by poor Jesse Piper,

The apothecary once more rose to propose his resolutions. Mr. Chapman had introduced

the words between parenthesis after the malcontents had withdrawn.

“Resolved, 1st. That this legally convoked church-meeting (in spite of the protest of George Palmer, Betsy Smallgrass, Sarah Marshall, Nathaniel Blackmann, and Jabez Whittle, to the contrary, and their voluntary withdrawal) has learnt with the deepest regret that an attempt has been made by (the said) George Palmer, Betsy Smallgrass, Mary Marshall, Nathaniel Blackmann, and Jabez Whittle, to PROTEST illegally, and notwithstanding the decisions of the majority of two successive meetings in his favour, against the appointment of James Rawston, Esq., to the post of *senior* deacon; and further, that the said George Palmer, &c., did sign and deliver to Jesse Piper—”

Jesse Piper. No, only George Palmer gave it to me.

Mr. Chapman. Silence, Jesse, silence!

The Apothecary. It's all right, Jesse; don't interrupt me. And then he continued—“on Sunday morning last, a REQUISITION, to be handed to the Rev. Mr. Chapman, the minister, to convoke a special church-meeting this day for purposes most insulting to our minister,

and injurious to the cause of Independent churches every where (and finally that this meeting has witnessed this evening the illegal, violent, and truly un-Christian conduct of the said George Palmer, &c.).”

Mrs. Templetown. Read that again, Sir, if you please.

Mrs. Turnley. Slowly and deliberately, that we may know what we are about.

Mr. William Tooth (a carpenter of the impartial party). Before the resolution is read again I wish to ask, what proof have we had of any *illegal protest* made by the accused parties? Where is the protest?

Mr. Chapman. It is burnt.

Mr. Tooth. Burnt, Mr. Chapman? Then how can we vote that these parties have signed such a protest in the absence of *all proof*?

The Senior Deacon. Not of ALL proof, brother Tooth, for I saw the protest and copied it, and examined the copy with the original; and it was I who counselled its being destroyed. Here is the copy.

From all parts. “Read it, read it.”
And my grandfather read the protest.

Mr. William Tooth. So far, so good,

[Cries of "So far so *bad*," from Roberts, Manton, and Trowbridge.]

Mr. William Tooth. Well, so far so bad, if you will, my friends. But now it is necessary we should hear the Requisition delivered by these parties to Jesse Piper on Sunday last.

Jesse Piper. In the interests of truth, I declare again, not delivered by these parties, but by *George Palmer only*.

Mr. Chapman. Silence! Jesse, silence! don't make a silly fellow of yourself. The Requisition was SIGNED by them all, was it not?

Jesse Piper. Oh! yes, Sir, it was signed by them all.

Mr. Chapman. Then what matters it who gave it into *your* hands?

The Dissenting Lawyer. As it was the act of all, all are supposed to have delivered it. This is what we call a legal fiction, Mr. Piper.

Jesse Piper. I certainly am no scholar, Sir (addressing himself to the last speaker), and I don't understand what *legal fiction* (I think you call it so) means; but all I know is, that it isn't true.

Mr. Chapman. Will you read the Requisition, Mr. Rawston?—(Mr. Rawston read the Requisi-

tion reflecting on the character of their Independent minister.)

Mr. William Tooth. Now we are in possession of the *facts* of the case, I second my dear Christian sisters, Mrs. Templetown and Mrs. Turnley, in their desire to hear the *first* resolution read again.

Mr. Chapman. Read it again, my friend (addressing himself to the apothecary); and it was read accordingly.

Mr. Robert Marsden (another of the impartialists and a bricklayer). But how do we know that the copy of the protest we have heard is an *exact* copy? and that there may not be some mistake?

The Senior Deacon. Is not my word sufficient?

Mr. Chapman. And mine too, Mr. Marsden?

So this objection was overruled.

The two Schismatics, who remained behind to hear and report progress, called out, unable to repress their indignation, "We object to the evidence."

Their protest was, however, wholly disregarded, and cries of "*Vote! vote!*" became very general.

Mrs. Templetown. Before we proceed to vote on the first, I think we ought to hear the *second* resolution.

Mrs. Turnley. And then perhaps the wisest course would be to adjourn, and hold another meeting.

Mr. Chapman. That would be most unwise, *Mrs. Turnley.*

Mr. Tooth. At least read the second resolution.

Mr. Chapman. Read it, my dear friend, (again smiling at the apothecary).

The Apothecary. The second resolution, Christian friends, would be as follows:—

“*Resolved, 2nd.* That for such acts and conduct the said George Palmer, &c., be expelled from this church as unworthy and un-Christian members and communicants; (and that the other eleven persons who have given lamentable proof this evening of adhering in a greater or less degree to the conduct and measures of the said George Palmer, &c., be reprovved and cautioned, and are hereby reprovved and cautioned accordingly).”

The Two Schismatics. Better and better still; so we are to be reprovved and cautioned for our independent votes.

Mrs. MacIntyre, Mrs. Chalmers, and Miss Fletcher (the three *really* quiet Christian ladies to whom I have already referred) now rose to withdraw. As they were proceeding towards the school-room door, Mr. Chapman left his presidential chair, and approached them.

“I hope you will stay and vote, dear friends,” said the minister.

“We feel we cannot do that, Mr. Chapman,” said Mrs. MacIntyre in an under tone, “for we desire the healing of the breaches, and not the widening them. Besides, we feel that none are in a temper and spirit to exclude five members from the Lord’s table.”

Mr. Chapman returned to his seat evidently annoyed, and whispered the reply of these ladies into the ear of my grandfather.

The Apothecary. I move then, Sir, the first resolution.

Mr. Chapman. Who seconds the resolution?

The Lawyer. I second it, Sir.

Mr. Chapman. As many as are in favour of this resolution hold up their hands.

The Surveyor. I move, Sir, that the votes be taken *by ballot*. There may be many whose votes would be controlled by a show of hands.

THE BALLOT is the most quiet and secret mode of voting.

The Apothecary. Yes, and the most truly independent.

The Lawyer. And in perfect harmony with all the *practices* of *Independent* churches.

Mr. William Tooth. But not quite in harmony with the old British character of plain honest John Bull bluntness, Mr. Chapman.

So a little debate arose as to whether the vote should be by show of hands, or *ballot*; but, as a matter of course, the latter carried the day; and Mr. Chapman's hat became once more the balloting-box. If the *ballot* had not been adopted, the seven impartialists would have voted by show of hands *for* the *first* resolution, but *against* the *second*, and would have proposed simply the SUSPENSION for three months, and not the final exclusion, of George Palmer and the four other delinquents; but now that the ballot was decided on, they all voted in favour both of the first and the second resolutions.

Another attempt was made by the IMPARTIALISTS to adjourn the decision—but this was only made for the sake of appearing impartial—since they knew beforehand that the pro-

posals would be rejected. As the majority was not doubtful, neither could their votes be so any longer. They had put on impartiality to produce an effect in their favour, but when it came to the vote, they acted on true modern *dissenting* tactics, and pulled all together.

The BALLOT occupied an hour, and the result of the voting was as follows :—

For the FIRST RESOLUTION ..	49
Against it	2
	—
	51

For the SECOND RESOLUTION ..	49
Against it none, since the two	
Schismatics refused to vote ..	0
	—
	49

It was now ELEVEN o'clock. Mr. Chapman attempted to pray ; but his voice faltered, and the prayer was cold and dead.

Jesse Piper asked the minister if he should give out a hymn ; but was told, “ It is too late, Jesse.” There was “ NO BENEDICTION,” and all seemed to feel it. The two schismatics eyed Mr. Chapman and the *senior* deacon with no very brotherly or Christian looks. The *former*

thanked each member for his, or her vote, and though Mrs. Templetown, Mrs. Turnley, and Mr. Tooth had given some trouble by their affected independence and impartiality, yet as the ballot had proved that they had *voted* rightly, though spoken wrongly for the purpose of showing their "independence," Mr. Chapman thanked *them* also, and "expressed his *hope* that they should soon hear no more of this attempt at disturbance."

The junior deacon was by no means so well satisfied with the result of this meeting as the minister and senior deacon appeared to be. I say *appeared*, for in reality the disclosures made by *George Palmer*, as to his knowledge of the violation of the trusts on which the chapel was founded, and of the existence of the heir to the Timmings' property in the parish poor-house, had given them more real sorrow and apprehension than the success of the *ballot* had afforded them pleasure. Mrs. Rawston and Mrs. Chapman walked home to Mr. Chapman's house, and my grandfather and Mr. Chapman followed.

"I most heartily congratulate you on the victory, my dear Sir," said Mrs. Chapman as my grandfather entered the room.

“I thank you, Mrs. Chapman,” replied the senior deacon, “but I fear the battle is but half fought.”

“It will not end with *my* life,” said Mr. Chapman. Mrs. Rawston looked sorrowful. She thought of “days departed never to return;” of happy years of Episcopal respect, order, tranquillity, and joy; and she had another source of sorrow which she had as yet not communicated to any one. The dear old rector, Mr. Seymour, had been taken ill some days since; and as he had felt that his end was approaching, had desired before he died to see his former friend and still parishioner, Mr. Rawston. He had sent to say so that very afternoon; but she had not thought fit to communicate to my grandfather the message before the Independent church-meeting should be over. I do not reproach her for this, as her motives were excellent; but the delay might have proved fatal to the desired interview.

“You appear out of spirits, my dear,” said my grandfather, as the pipes, in spite of the lateness of the hour, were smoking after supper at Mr. Chapman’s; “I fear this new sort of life does not suit you; you are a good, quiet creature, and cannot see the importance of

beating such fellows as George Palmer and Jabez Whittle."

"I cannot say I do," replied my grandmother, in a very mild and subdued tone; "and the scenes I have witnessed to-night almost make me wish ——"

She would not go on for fear of wounding the feelings of her host and hostess.

"That you had never come amongst us," said Mr. Chapman. My grandmother did not reply, but turning to my grandfather said, "It is not that *alone*, my dear Rawston, that has made me sorrowful to-night, but our good old rector is dying."

"Mr. Seymour dying!" exclaimed my grandfather, and his pipe fell from his hand as he started on his legs. "Mr. Seymour dying! and that whilst we have been at this unhappy meeting!"

"Even so, my dear," replied my grandmother; "and more than that, he has expressed a wish to see *you*."

"To see *me*, do you say? How do you know this?"

"He sent Miss Seymour this afternoon to say so."

"At what o'clock?"

“About three.”

“And why did you not tell me? Oh, why!”

“I was fearful of agitating you before the meeting this evening, my dear, or I should have done so.”

“And what did you say to Miss Seymour?”

“I told her the *whole* truth. She appeared to be deeply afflicted at the approaching loss of her father, though he is old and infirm; and deplored that you were engaged in such sad disputes, which she said she ‘*feared were not likely to improve your spiritual state, or to render you more fit for heaven.*’”

“Did she indeed?” asked my grandfather, with evident emotion; and then pulling out his watch, observed, “It is a quarter past twelve. Can I not see him to-night? The day and the night are alike to the dying. I think I must go and ask for admission. Mr. Seymour wished to see *me* when dying, and I not see him; that will never do. I must make the effort.”

During this conversation, Mr. Chapman and his wife were silent. The latter could not understand why Mr. Rawston, their *senior* deacon, should wish to see the rector; and though Mr. Chapman was not ignorant (and who could be in or within twenty miles of his parish?) of

the virtues and graces of their parochial clergyman, yet, as a "regular Independent," he could not sympathize on this subject with the *senior* deacon. Still he said, "I believe Mr. Seymour to be a good, though a mistaken man, Mr. Rawston; and it is very deplorable he should belong to such a church as he does. If he had been an Independent minister ——"

"He would have been torn to pieces by his people," said Mrs. Chapman; and here the conversation dropped. A few minutes afterwards, my grand-parents were on their way home, conversing all the while, not about the meeting, or George Palmer, but about their dying rector. It was agreed between them that my grandmother should retire to rest, that my grandfather should proceed to the Rectory, should see Miss Seymour, who was sure to be sitting up with her father, and should abide by her decision as to the sought-for interview.

He approached the once oft-frequented parsonage—the knocker was muffled, and so was the bell. The shaggy old dog of the house, who loved his master with an affection which admitted of no doubt, was howling in the back yard; there was one solitary candle standing

on the table of the study window, on the ground floor, where the theology of the learned and the devout, and above all, the Bible he loved so dearly, and read so much, had been for fifty years perused by the now dying rector and patriarch of the parish.

A sort of expiring fire, which no one cares or dares to touch, lest the noise of stirring it should at once inconvenience the sick "lov'd one," and even cause him who moved it to startle, was just observable from without. The servants had closed no shutters and drawn down no blinds; and there, in the very chair in which Mr. Seymour had so often reposed, sate his faithful and devoted old servant "Philip." His eyes were fixed on the fire; the tears were flowing copiously down his cheeks; and he had just repeated the COLLECT for the Communion of the Sick, with a fervour which denoted his feeling, and an emotion which betokened no vulgar grief. "Almighty, everliving God, maker of mankind, who dost correct those whom thou dost love, and chastise every one whom thou dost receive; we beseech Thee to have mercy on thy (dearly beloved) servant visited with thine hand, and to grant that he may take his sickness patiently, and recover

his bodily health (if it be thy gracious will), and whensoever his soul shall depart from the body, it may be without spot presented unto Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

"Yes, Amen! Amen!" repeated old Philip over and over again, whilst the furrows in his cheeks were indeed channels to floods of tears!

My grandfather tapped at the window many times before he roused poor old faithful Philip from his tears, his prayers, and his reveries; but at last he started, and by the light of the moon he saw Mr. Rawston. The door was slowly and quietly opened, and my grandfather walked into the study. Ah! there they were, the same well-thumbed Bibles, the same commentaries, homilies, concordance, he had so often seen before, when business or friendship had led him in past years to the parsonage. There were the same old engravings, the same death's head, the same representation of the ark in cedar wood, the same print of the Deluge, an exquisite painting of that blessed head which had been "*wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities,*" the same portrait of Saint Augustin, and in fine, nothing was wanting but *him*, who gave life and interest to all.

“Your dear master kindly sent me word by Miss Seymour early this afternoon, that he wished to see me, Philip.”

“I know he did, Sir, and he has since frequently inquired if you had come. Indeed he appeared so anxious to see you, that I went as far as the school door of your chapel in the evening, to urge you to come, but there were cries, knockings, and a riot at the door, and Mr. Farmer, the lawyer, was going to the cage between Job Perkins and his son-in-law.”

My grandfather was horrified. He seemed to himself for the moment as though he had been committing some deadly sin, to have been even an unoffending party in a tumult on the same evening that Mr. Seymour was perhaps passing through the dark valley of the shadow of death. But what was he to answer? He was silent for some seconds; and then summoning up courage, he said, “I hope you did not mention these things to your master, Philip?”

“Oh, no, no, Mr. Rawston, my master’s thoughts are in heaven; and do you suppose I would disturb his peace by such sad matters as these? No, no, Mr. Rawston, he only talks of his Saviour, of the preciousness of the gos-

pel promises, and of his desire to depart and to be with Christ, which he says, IS FAR BETTER."

"*Far better indeed, Philip,*" said my grandfather; "but will you just speak to Miss Seymour, and ask her if I can see her father now, or if she would prefer that I should call again in the morning?"

"I will, Sir," said Philip, and he disappeared.

A few minutes afterwards Miss Seymour made her appearance. My grandfather said that she looked like the angel must have done who was seen at the tomb of our Saviour, by the early visitors to that sacred spot; so calm, so sweet, so full of heavenly hope, bright visions, and immortal joys, that she appeared to have come down to console rather than to distress him.

"I am glad to see you, Mr. Rawston," said this truly Christian woman, with a blandness which such faith and such hopes as hers can alone at moments like those inspire; "my blessed father will be happy to converse with you for a few minutes, for he is fully aware of his approaching dissolution, and has declined postponing till the morning the interview he desires. Follow me."

And as she glided across the old hall with the step of a seraph, she lighted him to the door of the sick chamber. And there he was. His room, like his mind, was light and clear. It had more the air of an entrance to a banquetting room, than that of the chamber of death. The aged disciple of the best of masters was propped up in his white dimity bed, by pillows as white as snow; his arms lay extended on the counterpane before him, his fine silver locks luxuriated around his pale and withered face, but his eyes still seemed to retain a portion of their former brilliancy. His daughter approached the bed-side: "Mr. Rawston is here, dear papa, shall he come and sit *here*?" pointing to an arm-chair next the dear old rector. "Yes, my sweet Mary," was his reply; and as my grandfather advanced, he said, "I wished to speak to you before I died, Mr. Rawston. I am very feeble, and cannot say much; but I could not go to my Saviour without first speaking a word from Him to your soul. Mary, my dear, leave us a few minutes; I wish to be alone with Mr. Rawston, and our covenant God."

"Thank you, Sir, thank you, thank you a

thousand times for your condescension," said my weeping grandfather.

"*Not condescension*, Mr. Rawston; for it was only God who was condescending, when he became man, and dwelt amongst us;" and then, making a pause for a few seconds, he asked,

"Mr. Rawston, do you love me?"

"Indeed I do, Sir," said my grandfather.

"Then listen to me with affection, and do not think I wish to wound you."

My grandfather said that he should be grateful, most grateful, for his advice and counsels. And the old rector proceeded.

"In a few hours, blessed be his holy name, I shall be with my Saviour, to spend with him a glorious eternity."

When he said this, a sort of halo of light and glory appeared to my grandfather to encircle the face and head of his once beloved pastor.

"I have no doubt of *that*, Sir," said my grandfather; and then Mr. Seymour proceeded.

"Now, my dear Mr. Rawston, can you say with me, that through the blessed redemption purchased for you by the blood and righteous-

ness of Christ Jesus your Saviour, that if you departed this night for another world, you have a sure and a certain hope of a glorious resurrection?"

My grandfather could not reply. He felt that he was in the presence of a soul about to be emancipated from the thralldom and sins of time, and to wing its happy way to the crystal portals of heaven. It seemed to him like the anticipation of the day of Judgment.

"I will not ask you for a reply now; but think of this inquiry when I shall be gone from this world for ever." Here again he paused.

"I *know* that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." His breath then seemed disturbed, but he soon resumed, "And though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. Whom I shall see for MYSELF (yes, for myself, Mr. Rawston), and MINE eyes shall behold, and not another. Is this YOUR experience, my good friend?"

My grandfather sobbed aloud.

"I will not ask for a reply," continued the dear old rector; "but do not forget the first duty of both Churchman and dissenter is SELF-EXAMINATION."

“It is indeed,” said my grandfather; and the venerable rector went on.

“Are you SURE, Mr. Rawston, that *your* spiritual health is as improving as *my* physical health is declining? Are you living close with God? Do you pray much to him? Is your life one of prayer and faith?”

“No, no,” said my grandfather, who felt that he had not been advancing in spiritual things since he left the preaching of the old rector.

“Then, my dear friend, believe the testimony of a dying man, that nothing but Christ will do for a dying hour.”

The venerable old man placed his head on his pillow and repeated, evidently suffering from bodily pain, a translation of the prayer of Mary, Queen of Scots.

“O Lord my God, I hope in thee!

O blessed Jesus, set me free.

In heavy chains, in sadder pains,

I long for thee;

And fainting, sighing, bend the knee

To cry imploring, Set me free!”

My grandfather asked if he should call for Miss Seymour? The old rector made a negative sign; and a few seconds after, apparently in

less pain, said, faintly and slowly, but quite intelligibly,

“Mr. Rawston, there is such a sin as SCHISM. I do not accuse you of committing it—but are you growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, among those to whom you have attached yourself?” And then, as though to evince that he had no feeling but that of Christian love for all who *really* loved his divine master in sincerity and truth, he repeated the first verse of the hymn of Toplady,

“When languor and disease invade
This trembling house of clay,
'Tis sweet to look beyond the cage,
And long to fly away.”

“Sweet, indeed, Mr. Rawston. Cultivate those graces which will endure when time shall be no longer.”

At every new sentence the venerable rector paused, prayed inwardly, and sought new strength and new grace to continue his exhortations. There he lay, the old servant of a faithful God; affection was around him, reverence attended him, hope was within his heart; and the steady light that shone upon him was not the departing ray of the sunset of existence,

but the morning beam of a dawning immortality.

“Mr. Rawston,” continued the excellent Mr. Seymour, who appeared less oppressed, and rose in his bed as he spoke, “a mere professor of religion is like a butterfly, all surface; if the breath of heaven breathe upon it, it is driven hither and thither. But the Christian is like the dove, a strong pinioned bird. She may meet the thunder-storm in her course, but she is determined to persevere; she will tack about, and give even the winds and tempests to know that she has a nest, that it is her *home*, that her heart is there, and that she *must* reach it.”

He sank back on his pillow somewhat exhausted, but he had evidently not said all.

After a few minutes of quiet breathing, he resumed.

“You should not have left our church, Mr. Rawston. The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, is the God of *our church*. It is no light matter to leave our church. The presence of God has been felt there for ages; and her worship, sacraments, and doctrines, are those of the word of God. But I have felt less at your leaving our church than I have at the

worldliness of your dissent. It is not our episcopacy that will save us, but worldly-mindedness will lose us."

The dear good man was evidently exhausted; and when his daughter entered the room, he smiled so benignantlly upon her, that my grandfather expressed his apprehensions that he had stayed too long.

"No, no," said Mr. Seymour. Mary will read to us; and she took one of his favourite books, a MS. collection of beautiful thoughts and favourite words of the wise and good; and after smoothing his pillow, and kissing his calm temples, she began as follows:—

"The things of heaven are safe and sure;
The things of earth, though bright they be,
Will fade and perish speedily.
The things of heaven, of heavenly birth,
Unchanged, eternal shall remain,
While the most stedfast things of earth
Are all unstable, trembling, vain,
The sport of mutability.
The things of earth, though fair they be,
Will fade and perish speedily.

"The things we see above are bright,
Pure, spiritual, and beautiful,
While all below is dark as night,
Unintellectual, selfish, dull;

I know not what the senses see
To wean us from eternity
To scenes that fade so speedily.

“The things of earth are like a river,
A summer river, swiftly dry;
The things above endure for ever,
Their ocean is immensity;
There streams of joy which ne’er shall be
Exhausted, roll eternally;
And thither let our spirits flee.”

“Beautiful! beautiful!” said the old rector;
“but read me Fénelon, Mary.”

Mary knew what he meant. It was an exquisite passage on “Lord, teach us to pray.”

“O Lord, I know not what I should ask of thee. Thou only knowest what are my wants, and thou lovest me better than I can love myself. O Lord, give to me, thy child, what is necessary, whatsoever it may be. I dare not ask either crosses or consolations; all that I shall do is to present myself to thee. Behold my wants which I am not acquainted with, but do thou behold and do according to thy mercy. Smite or heal, depress me or raise me up. I adore all thy purposes without knowing them——”

“Stop!” said the dear old rector, “read that again.”

“ I adore all thy purposes without knowing them. I have nothing to say for myself, but take me in sacrifice. I entirely abandon myself to thee ! I have no more any desire but to accomplish thy will. Lord, teach me to pray, and pray thou thyself in me.”

Mr. Seymour repeated several times “ pray thou thyself in me,” and then went to sleep—in Jesus ! The saint had exchanged earth for heaven.

Although the medical attendants of the departed saint had not expected him to survive many days, neither themselves nor his daughter had anticipated so sudden a removal. But there he lay, calmly smiling, whilst all were weeping around him, with unruffled cheek, no feature the least altered, and only the cold and marble representation of what he was, e'er his soul, emancipated from its earthly habitation, had taken its flight to heaven.

“ Hark ! as he quits this earthly scene, what sounds salute his ear ;

Angelic bands, with music sweet, his raptured spirit bear
Up to the regions of delight, where pleasures never cease ;
For he has left this world of woe, and entered into peace.”

My grandfather performed with mournful duty the last offices of friendship, unassisted

by the faithful Philip, who, on hearing that his master was no more, had thrown himself at the foot of the bed, and given way to the feelings of his heart. "O God," he said, "I have lost the best of masters. My poor dear master is dead. I have no earthly friends now; but Lord have mercy upon poor Philip." Then he wept as though the fountains of his grief were broken up; and again he prayed for divine direction, protection, and support. The contrast was striking between the agitation of the servant, and the placidity of the master; but if saints above are permitted to observe what passes on earth, the soul of the departed Mr. Seymour has not unfrequently pleaded for his faithful and devoted Philip. It is difficult for man to say, when contemplating such a character as this affectionate and faithful servant, attentive as he was to all his duties, to the external forms of godliness, and imbued with so large a portion of all that is kindly and benign, whether that change of heart had been effected without which man "can never see God." The influences of the Spirit on the mind and heart are so varied, that God himself hath compared them to the unknown and mysterious wind. "There are those to whom

a sense of religion has come in tempest and storm; there are those whom it has summoned amid scenes of revelry and idle vanity; there are those, too, who have heard its still, small voice amid rural leisure and placid retirement. But perhaps the knowledge which causeth not to err, is most frequently impressed upon the mind during the season of affliction; and tears are the softened showers which cause the seed of heaven to spring and take root in the human heart." This was the case with poor Philip. The death of his master led his soul to lay hold of his master's hope, his master's God; and at a good old age, respected and loved by all who knew him, the faithful Philip died, like his master, in the full assurance of hope, and "was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom."

My grandfather did not leave his former pastor's family till the next morning. That family consisted of Miss Seymour, two children of her deceased brother, and his widow, all of whom resided with Mr. Seymour after the death of his son, of the faithful Philip, and of two scarcely less faithful female servants. Miss Seymour was a Christian of no dwarfish stature. Her soul had drank deeply

at the wells of salvation, and she could indeed "give a reason of the hope that was in her, with meekness and fear." She had lost her mother many years, and had thus been called on, at a somewhat early period of her life, to be at once a daughter and a companion to her father. Together they had studied the sacred oracles, worshipped their beloved Saviour, trodden the earthly courts of the Most High, and looked forward to the same blessed and glorious eternity in heaven.

When the first emotions of grief, to which the purest natures do even well to yield in moderation, had subsided, Miss Seymour collected the inmates of the rectory in the Chamber of Death. "Dear friends," she said, addressing herself indiscriminately both to servants and relatives, "let us pray;" and then with a sweet and gracious voice, often stopped by the sobs of grief which she neither sought to repress or indulge, she poured out her soul to her God. My grandfather was deeply affected when she prayed for *him*, "that his new connections might be favourable to his growth in grace, and to that calm, serene, unwavering piety which God could alone approve." She prayed also "that he might beware how he

followed the multitudes who walked by broad and commodious ways ; that he might rather seek out the traces of the few :” and then applying such prayer to herself and all present, she added, “ May we all seek for the footsteps of the saints along the rugged paths of repentance, climbing over the rugged rocks into places of safety, with the sweat of our brow, expecting that the last step of our lives shall be a violent struggle to enter the narrow gate of eternity.

“ Oh ! may we then live and die,” she said, “ with thee, blessed Saviour, who came to show us the true way to heaven ; and let our only fear be, lest we should not finish our sacrifice on the same altar whereon thou wert consummated. Alas ! O Lord, all our endeavours here tend to be more at ease, and thereby to remove ourselves from the true way to heaven. We know not what we do : we do not comprehend the mystery of grace which writes a beatitude with tears, pronouncing the mourners happy. But grant, O Lord, that though we suffer, we may catch a glimpse of heaven ; that though we suffer, it may be with even willing hearts ; may we feel that we love thee, and are beloved by thee.”

There was a sort of heavenly harmony and melody in her prayer; and on she prayed, lacking no words, for her soul spake to God, and she would not let him go without a blessing.

When her prayer was ended, she bade them all sit still while she read to them, from the almost inspired Prayer-book, "The Order for the Burial of the Dead." When she came to that part of the concluding Collect, "we meekly beseech thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness; that when we shall depart this life, we may rest on Him, as our *hope* is thus our brother doth;" poor Philip sobbed aloud, whilst his heart seemed ready to burst with emotion, "No, not HOPE, but CERTAINTY—SURE; for if my blessed master isn't gone to heaven, no one ever went there." The Burial Service being closed, Miss Seymour requested them to remain in silence, each occupying himself for some time in private prayer to God. My grandfather often declared in future life, it was the most solemn half-hour he had ever spent. The old clock ticked loudly in the passage. The faithful dog still bayed in the yard. The corpse of the departed rector lay stretched in the bed; and

the members of this mourning family were all engaged in silent prayer.

Miss Seymour broke the silence ; she said, “ Let me now read to you a few extracts from the ‘ Good-night Album ’ of my beloved father, portions of which I was in the habit, as you know, of reading to him for an hour prior to his going to sleep, during the last five years of his life. I will select some of the most appropriate. One of his favourite pieces was the following :—

“ Though unseen by human eye,
My Redeemer’s hand is nigh ;
He has pour’d salvation’s light
Far within the vale of night ;
There will God my steps control,
There his presence bless my soul.
Lord, whate’er my sorrows be,
Teach me to look up to thee !”

Another of his oft-repeated prayers was from an imitation of the Persian.

“ Lord, who art merciful, as well as just,
Incline thine ear to me, a child of dust ;
Not what I would, O Lord, I offer thee,
Alas ! but what I can.
Father Almighty, who hast made me man,
And bade me look to heaven, for thou art there,
Accept my sacrifice and humble prayer.

Four things which are not in thy treasury
I lay before thee, Lord, with this petition,
My nothingness, my wants,
My sins, and my contrition."

As my grandfather listened to these and some other extracts from the "Good-night Album" of the departed rector, he thought, with one who has not less truly said,

"It matters little at what hour o' the day
The righteous falls asleep; death cannot come
To him untimely who is fit to die;
The less of this cold world, the more of heaven;
The briefer life, the earlier immortality."

The morning light of that sun whose untired course is at once an emblem of God's goodness, and of man's immortality, was the signal for the departure of my grandfather. Still as he prepared to quit the scene of sadness and solitude, his heart felt that it clung to the family whose guest and inmate he had become in the hour of mourning. Miss Seymour took leave of him with emotion, and often did he return during the week of woe to aid her in the preparations for a funeral, at which all attended except some bigoted dissenters of the strict communion Baptist denomination, and who professed "to lament that Mr. Seymour had

not received baptism by immersion, and had not made a public profession of faith."

"At least he received the baptism of the Holy Spirit," said my grandfather, who heard this declaration made, "and his life of faith and love was the best profession he could leave to the Church and his family."

But the funeral of Mr. Seymour, like all other events in this fitful, changeful scene, was soon forgotten, like the years before the flood. For we are the same things that our fathers have been, see the same sights, drink the same stream, feel the same sun, and run the same course.

They died—aye, they died ! and we things that are now,
Who walk on the turf that lies over their brow,
Who make in their dwellings a transient abode,
Meet the changes they met on their pilgrimage road.

The old parsonage-house was soon "beautified for the new comer;" the relics of former days were packed up in large cases; the books were obliged to be sold (except some few precious volumes kept by Miss Seymour with filial love), for the rector was very far indeed from being rich when he died; and the family of the rector retired to a pretty, but really humble cottage outside the town, accompanied

by the faithful Philip and one of the maid-servants, whilst the other married a worthy tradesman, and lived a long life of respectability and virtue. These are the transitions of "*The church in the wilderness*," whose pious, laborious, and devoted clergy, instead of being honoured and cherished, are held up by modern dissenters as the fattened and rich-stalled theologians of the nineteenth century. After having preached with fidelity and truth, zeal and unction, learning and piety, to a large congregation for many years; and after having not unfrequently expended a moderate private fortune in almsgiving and deeds of charity to a suffering and needy population; the only resource of the clergyman's family is a policy or two at an insurance office on the interest of the principal of which, and the produce of the family library, the surviving members must live the rest of their days. Yet this is the Church which is cruelly and unjustly maligned by modern dissenterism!

But I must now resume the thread of my narrative, broken in upon as it has been by the mournful episode of the honoured and beloved Mr. Seymour.

My readers will easily believe that my grand-

father, who was but half a *modern* Independent, was wholly unable on the day of Mr. Seymour's death to attend to the affair of Mr. Farmer and his arrest, and was therefore compelled to entrust its management to the young dissenting attorney. Mr. Farmer was brought up before the magistrate, accused, 1st, of having entered forcibly into the school-room of the dissenting chapel; 2nd, of having made a riot there; and 3rd, of having struck Job Perkins, the constable, repeated blows whilst discharging his duty. Mr. Farmer was attended by his clerks, and by George Palmer and his coadjutors. Mr. Chapman, Jesse Piper, and the two constables, were witnesses against him, and the Independent lawyer conducted the prosecution. Mr. Farmer, an adept in quibbling, of course made many legal and technical objections; such as, 1st, that the school-room was not the property of Mr. Chapman, but of trustees; 2nd, that the school-room was not a private but a public room, and therefore that he had as much right to go in there as any one else; 3rd, that Mr. Chapman was only the minister; 4th, that he made no riot in the school-room, and should have remained there quietly had he not been first attacked; and

then, 5th and finally, that as to assaulting Job Perkins, the laws of the country allowed a man to defend himself from a false and unjust arrest. When, however, the magistrate had heard all these objections, and the arguments for and against them, he decided that it "was a fit case to go to the sessions;" required Mr. Farmer to enter into security to appear there, and to find two sureties to be bound for him; and bound over Jesse Piper, Mr. Chapman, and the two constables, to go on with the prosecution. Unfortunately for poor Jesse, he was the *first* witness, and so the cause was called "*Piper against Farmer.*" In due time this trial came on; the objections ineffectually made before the magistrate were held good by the quarter sessions, and TOM FARMER was declared duly ACQUITTED. This decision was followed by a dinner to that gentleman at the sign of the "Golden Eagle," at which George Palmer presided, and where punch was more plentiful than good breeding, and passion prevailed both over reason and religion.

The Sunday after the fatal church-meeting which had led to these proceedings, Mr. Chapman announced that another church-meeting would be held on the following Friday, to confirm

the decision of the last assembly; and although Tom Farmer had resolved not again to attend and force his way into the school-room, he counselled all the schismatics once more to assemble, and in a body to PROTEST against the confirmation of this dissenting Arches Court, or rather dissenting Inquisition. Of course, Mr. Farmer's advice was taken; the preparations of the former meeting on the part of the Chapmanites were renewed; Job Perkins and his son-in-law were again supplied with rum and water and a can of beer; the chapel was again watched, the school-room door guarded, and all strangers excluded, though the five expelled, and the eleven censured members, were allowed to be present, "*because,*" said the young lawyer, "The sentence is not operative until it be *confirmed.*" However, as the forces of the insurgents were now known, and as little feared by Mr. Chapman and his adherents, most of them remained firm, but the attendance was not quite so large as at the first meeting. More than three hours were again consumed in the renewed PROTESTS of George Palmer and his adherents; the most unkind and ungodly speeches were made, and ejaculations uttered, by these "*Independent Christians;*" and when

the balloting-hat of Mr. Chapman was once more examined, it was found to contain,—

For the confirmation of the Vote of Exclu-

sion of five, and censure of eleven Mem-

bers 44

Against it 19

Majority for the measure .. 25

As soon as the numbers were announced,

George Palmer rose and said, “Illegal and usurping members of a Presbyterian chapel, we, the sixteen members illegally excluded or censured by your votes, shall all now withdraw. The five of us whom you have expelled will try your right at law. The eleven you have censured despise your censures, treat them with scorn, and fling them back in your faces. The Courts of King’s Bench and Chancery will decide between us, and we shall see which will be the strongest.”

Mr. Chapman. We shall indeed; do your worst. We know you now, and we do not regret your loss.

“Let us give three cheers for their departure,” said *Manton*. “And we will give three cheers at leaving you,” said *Betsy Smallgrass*.

Mr. Chapman looked ashamed, and *Jesse*

Piper held down his head. My grandfather was not present, for it was the day of the funeral of Mr. Seymour.

When the mutual cheers had ceased, Mr. Chapman appeared unhappy. "A church-meeting without prayer," he thought, "was an anomaly, at least in the primitive churches:" and yet he had a sense of shame and of decency about him; and how could he ask God's blessing on such scenes as those which had just transpired? So the meeting broke up, all breathing fury and vengeance, the inseparable companions of a dissenting feud. The members had not left the vestry-room before eleven o'clock; it was then too late for Mr. Chapman to see my grandfather; besides, he knew that his heart was full of Mr. Seymour and the funeral; and therefore he deferred till Saturday morning his visit to his *senior* deacon.

"Well, Mr. Rawston," said the minister, as he entered my grandfather's back parlour at the early hour of nine the next morning, "I am happy to inform you, my dear friend, that we have given a death-blow to the faction: a majority of twenty-five has expelled George Palmer and his four associates, and censured the eleven who have supported his measures."

“But what will become of the eleven who have been censured?” asked my grandfather.

“Oh, the whole sixteen have resigned and retired, declaring they will drag us through the King’s Bench and the Court of Chancery, and get our chapel and all its dependencies transferred to old Timmings in the poor-house, as its lawful owner.”

“That is the worst feature in our case, Mr. Chapman,” said my grandfather. “But my mind is too much affected to-day by the funeral of Mr. Seymour of yesterday to enter into these topics. Oblige me by deferring all till next Monday; we will meet, if you please, in this room at ten o’clock.” And after a few minutes’ conversation as to the funeral and the virtues of Mr. Seymour, the dissenting minister took his leave, and returned to his home and his reflections. These were by no means consoling or cheerful. Nineteen of his members and their families had left him. The trust-deed was to be contested. Upwards of fifty sittings would be vacant in the chapel. A prosecution against Mr. Farmer had to be carried on, and paid for. A Chancery suit was threatened. The junior deacon had become alarmed and

nervous; and the *senior* deacon had given many proofs that he had become an Independent without knowing the principles or no-principles of Independency, and was as much affected by the loss of the clergyman of the Church of England as if it had been himself, his own pastor, Mr. Chapman. "But then," said Mr. Chapman to himself, "all this will wear off. If Mr. Seymour still lived, there might be danger of Mr. Rawston returning to the Church. But his successor may be a very different sort of man—perhaps a young one; the Seymour family will most likely remove; Mr. Rawston's pride and position are compromised; if he should now return to the Church, it would be said, however untruly, that it was because he had been rejected as senior deacon; and, in addition to all this, I think Mr. Rawston is attached to me, besides having to defend himself, and to prosecute Mr. Farmer, as well as to maintain his rights and dignity as senior deacon. No, no, he will not, he cannot leave us. Mr. Seymour's death is in this respect a good thing for us."

I am sorry to record, but as a faithful historian I must do so, that Mr. Chapman knew but too well the failings of my grandfather,

and the difficulties of his position. During the greater part, indeed, of Saturday, and during the whole of Sunday afternoon, he had many, many misgivings; and my grandmother did all she could to prevail on him, cost what it might, to return to the bosom of the Church, resign his senior deaconship, throw up his membership at the Independent chapel, give fifty pounds to the poor of the congregation, and never seek again that power which was much more carnal than spiritual in its character, and which "could not," as Miss Seymour had said, "be favourable to his growth in grace." But she did *not* succeed.

"Some of the Episcopalians have called me an apostate," he said, "and really the expression is proper, for I did apostatize from their system. They have compared me to Proteus, a fictitious deity who changed into all forms. The comparison is not very far from truth, for I was brought up in the Church of England, then for three months heard all Separatists, and then became an Independent. It has already been insinuated by George Palmer, nay, openly proclaimed, that one day I should change again, and become a Conformist to the Establishment. And so I might, if I should

not be thought to be a weathercock, and after having belonged to all, be rejected by all, and belong to none."

My grandmother sought to remove or explain away these objections, which all had their origin in pride and vanity ; but my grandfather had one darling feeling, which he could not resign, it was the love of power. " At the chapel I am not only *something*, but everything ; manager, senior deacon, and the chief of an influential party ; and it would not be fair, just, honest, after having brought about all this commotion by my introduction to the post I desired to possess, to leave Mr. Chapman and his divided church ; I must stay." In vain did my good grandmother assure him, " that these were the instigations of the devil, and of his own proud heart." He grew petulant, and put an end at last to all further discussions, by saying, " that if *she* felt it *her* duty to return to the Church of England, by all means to do so ; but that he owed it to *himself*, and to his character and position, to waive all difficulties, and get over all the obstacles, spiritual and temporal, as well as he could, and to remain senior deacon of Mr. Chapman's meeting." My grandfather also was naturally fond of

excitement. A trial at a quarter sessions was not alarming to *him*. The thought of a Chancery suit did not terrify *him*. He was not an unjust, or a dishonest man, nor was he *partial* to litigation. But then he liked agitation, took an active part in town or county elections ; and though he supported moral and religious candidates in preference to all others, still attended the hustings, and even sometimes moved and seconded a resolution. Alas ! alas ! these motives and sentiments were too powerful for the small portion of genuine piety mixed up with his character, and he sunk back again into the slough of a *senior deaconship*.

Mr. Chapman spent the greater part of Monday with my grandfather. He found his senior deacon much more decided in his tone than he expected, and rejoiced to hear him declare, " that he had made up his mind after much reflection to maintain, in his person, the rights of all deacons of dissenting meetings." He embarrassed Mr. Chapman, however, by asking him to point out some " treatise on the duties, privileges, and responsibilities of the officers of Independent chapels," since the pastor was obliged reluctantly to confess, that the *duties* were nowhere defined, the privileges by no

means numerous, and the responsibilities much greater than as yet he appeared to be acquainted with. Still there was no book, because there was no rule. "In some chapels, where the deacons are wealthy and well-informed men," said Mr. Chapman very ingenuously, "they refuse to do many things, which poorer and uneducated men are required to perform; such as visiting sick members, collecting the pew-rents, handing round the elements at the administration of the Lord's supper, looking after Sunday-school children, and examining into the conduct of candidates for membership, and reporting thereon. Then, when the minister is indisposed, a *poorer* deacon will perform his out-door work for him, and even preach in the villages, and will uniformly pray, sometimes exhort, at a prayer-meeting. Besides this, he will attend all church-meetings, and assist in keeping the minutes when he can read and write."

"*When he can read and write, did you say, Mr. Chapman?*" asked my grandfather, in a tone which indicated something more than astonishment; "what, can men be deacons of Independent churches, and not read and write?"

“To be sure they can, Mr. Rawston ; why, I knew a deacon in the county of Essex, and a farmer, too, who could neither read nor write to the end of his life, and yet he could pray and exhort quite as well as his minister.”

“That reminds me, Mr. Chapman,” said my grandfather, “of a story I once heard of an *Independent* minister who preached at a small village near Enfield, in Middlesex, and who took for his text a verse in the Bible, the principal part of which was in *italics*, showing, as you know, that those words had been supplied by the translators, and were not to be found in the original. But the dissenting minister, wholly unacquainted with all such rules, told his congregation, *that the words in italics claimed their special attention, because they were put into a different print in order to show their peculiar weight and importance.*”

Mr. Chapman trusted there were not many such ignoramuses as the minister in question, and my grandfather hoped so too ; but their hopes were not free from doubts and uncertainty.

“With respect to the choice of deacons,” said Mr. Chapman, “you will easily understand, Mr. Rawston, that much must depend on the

state of '*the cause*,' and the character of the people composing the church and congregation. Why, in some dissenting congregations there are not five respectable, well-informed people in the whole chapel, and these are very often only hearers, and sometimes occasional ones, yet there *must* be deacons. Not unfrequently, indeed, when a deacon dies, the post is vacant for many months, and I might add for a longer epoch; and even many Independent meeting-houses have only *one* deacon instead of two; not because there are not aspirants to the office, but because there are really no qualified persons to be found. It is not with us as in a parish, Mr. Rawston. In a parish, however poor and small, some gentleman, squire, respectable farmer, or even wealthy manufacturer, will be found, who will feel happy to discharge the duties of churchwarden; but amongst us dissenters this is not the case, since we only form a small fraction of society. But then you know, Mr. Rawston, not many mighty, not many noble are called."

"Still, my good friend," said my grandfather, "I see no necessary connexion between ignorance and piety; and I cannot understand that a cobbler would make a better deacon than a

gentleman, *i. e.* if both men were equally real Christians. I have often heard it said of the dissenters, that they gave too much importance to poverty, as though poverty and grace *always* went hand-in-hand. Besides which, ignorance and poverty are *not* necessarily inseparable. A man may be comparatively poor, and yet well-informed, and read and write as well as I can. There are millions of such instances to be found in the Established Church; but then, as you say very truly, the Church of England is the *national* religion, and embraces the millions, whilst the Independents are only a very small fraction of the population, and only embrace the units. But I am fond of espousing the cause of small bodies and comparatively insignificant societies; and so I make no objection."

The conversation was thus proceeding, when the pastor, really apprehending that its result might tend rather to shake the very infant state of my grandfather's dissenting opinions than to confirm them, changed the subject, and begged "to call his attention to the affair of old Timmings in the poor-house, and to the necessity there was for removing him from thence, and sending him to some remote part where he should never be heard of more."

“How old is he?” said my grandfather.

“Sixty-one, Sir.”

“Do you know if he is very infirm?”

“Certainly not, Mr. Rawston,” said the minister, “if what I’m told is true.”

“Of course he can read and write?”

“Oh! yes, very well, I believe. He was once, you know, very respectable.”

“Then I will tell you,” said my grandfather, “what we will do with him. A friend of mine has lately purchased a great many turnpike tolls in the north of England. I will write to him, and beg him to put old Timmings into some quiet gate-house, where he may have his gate-house rent free, and £30 a year to live upon.”

“That will be just the very thing,” said Mr. Chapman; “this is more than fortunate, it is providential.”

“But he must be asked if he would accept the post,” replied my grandfather; “and I think it would be well that you should go up to the poor-house this very day.”

Mr. Chapman took this opportunity of repeating an observation of their young friend, Mr. Lawyer Brooksbank, “that if the trusts had been violated, and if the present occupiers

should be turned out, it did not follow that the property would belong to old Mr. Timmings, but the Court of Chancery might decide that it should be made over to the Presbyterians—or the Crown might claim it as its property.”

“Well, be that as it may,” said Mr. Rawston, “inasmuch as the deed declared that no other than Presbyterian worship should be conducted in the chapel, and as there has already been a Chancery suit about Mrs. Timmings’s property, it certainly will be well to get the heir out of the way, especially as since the last suit was terminated, all the other Timmingeses have died, and this one is the *only* survivor, who has no children or relatives in the wide world.”

Of course, Mr. Chapman acquiesced in this decision : and after having agreed with his senior deacon that Mr. Farmer should be prosecuted, as I have before stated, and that he, the minister, should call on the members who had voted for him, to thank them for their allegiance, took leave of my grandfather, and proceeded to the parish poor-house.

The poor-house was an old square brick building, situate at the extremity of the parish. Its inmates, in those times, were the old, the

sick, and the disabled. They were supplied, not only with all that was necessary, but even with what was comfortable: since the poor-houses in those days neither resembled the workhouses of after years, where the young, the aged, the depraved, and the virtuous, the diseased, the healthy, and the dying, were all huddled together in indiscriminate profligacy; nor the cold-hearted UNIONS of the year 1841.

Mr. Chapman, who was not unknown to *Samuel Timmings*, though the latter was much less so to the former, except by report, was soon shown into the master's room, and was quickly waited upon by poor Samuel.

"Well, Mr. Chapman," said the old man as he entered the parlour, "what do *you* want with me? I have been here five years, and not a soul has come near me; but now, all in two or three days, I have had George Palmer, and Mr. Farmer the lawyer, and now *you* to see me. What can all this be about? Is any thing wrong at the chapel?"

Mr. Chapman was confounded by this reception. It was quite clear that he had deferred his oft-threatened visit too long, and that the schismatics were before him. But collecting

all the calmness of which he was capable, he said,

“Indeed, Mr. Timmings, I have intended, for months past, to pay you a visit, and inquire as to your condition and prospects, but have put off, from time to time, my call on you, and should not, perhaps, have come to-day, if a friend of mine had not told me, that if you were capable of managing such a thing, he could very likely put you into a *turnpike-gate house*, to collect the tolls, where, besides the lodging for nothing, you might hope to get £30 a-year to live upon.”

“That’s odd enough, too,” said poor Samuel, “for Mr. Farmer, the lawyer, made me an offer on Saturday, not quite so good, to be sure, but still to take charge of ‘THE GRANGE,’ about four miles from here, and which perhaps you know is thrown into Chancery, and live there as a sort of bailiff, till the law-suit is decided. He promised me £20 a-year, and as much wood for my fire as I could wish for; but then he wanted me to sign some paper, giving him the right to claim your meeting-house as my property, because, he said, my great-aunt’s wishes as to the chapel had not been attended to.”

“Well, Mr. Timmings, and did you accept his offer?”

“Why, no, Mr. Chapman, I did not. I told him that my life had been so thorny and so rough a one, that, disabled as I am with my left arm, I thank God for the rest and quietness of this poor-house, and now only wish to be left alone and die in peace. Besides which, I could not think of giving my name to a law-suit, without being sure of gaining it; and even then I doubt very much whether, at my time of life, it would suit me to get into Chancery. If I got the property in my lifetime, which is very doubtful, I should scarcely know what to do with it, especially as it is only a dissenting chapel; and if the business should not be settled in my lifetime, I have no child or heir in this cold, bleak world to carry on the suit, or claim the estate after me.”

“And a very wise decision, Mr. Timmings, you have come to,” said Mr. Chapman.

“Yes, I dare say you think so,” replied poor Samuel, rather peevishly. “If I were twenty years younger, I don’t say what might have happened; but at my time of life—no, I’ll have nothing to do with it.”

“Still,” said Mr. Chapman, “I think a respectable man like yourself, belonging to a good family, and the last of its members, should not

die in a poor-house ; and my friend Mr. Rawston tells me, that he thinks you can make yourself very comfortable in the toll-house."

" Oh ! Mr. Rawston is your friend, is he ?" asked the old man. " It is he, whose friend would put me in a toll-house, is it ?"

" Precisely so," replied Mr. Chapman.

" But where is it situate ?"

" In the north of England."

" Ah ! I see all about it in the twinkling of an eye. Both of you wish to get me out of the way ; the one at ' THE GRANGE ' and the other at the ' TOLL-HOUSE. ' No, thank ye, gentlemen ; no, thank ye. I will remain at the poor-house, where I should never have received either of your visits, but for these disputes about your chapel. You need not fear me. I shall not oblige Mr. Farmer by giving my name to him, as a plaintiff in a suit at law, nor Mr. Rawston, by absconding to the North, to perish with cold in a toll-house. You need not fear me—either of you ; settle your differences among yourselves as well as you can, and let me live my few short remaining days in peace. A minister of religion, Sir, should not have undertaken such a visit. I am a Churchman, Mr. Chapman, poor enough,

heaven knows ; but the late Mr. Seymour would have died, rather than disgrace his cloth. Tom Farmer was in his place when he came to entrap or entice me—but a minister of religion should leave all these matters to lawyers and sharpers. Good day, Mr. Chapman !” and without waiting for any reply, and, indeed, refusing to hear any, he bustled out of the master’s parlour, and regained the ward where he was sitting when he was called out to speak to the dissenting minister.

Mr. Chapman felt ashamed, confounded, stupified ; but knowing that to remain there would by no means better his case, he slunk out of the parish poor-house, and returned to the residence of the *senior* deacon. On arriving there he recounted faithfully all that had transpired ; and my grandfather and Mr. Chapman “*congratulated* each other that, at least, old Samuel would not be a party to either law or Chancery suit against the Independents.” I do not say that my grandfather did not, for the moment, envy the independent position of the inmate of the poor-house, in the whole of this unsuccessful negotiation—and that he did not partake the abasement which Mr. Chapman had felt. But then he was delighted to know

that Tom Farmer had failed in *his* intentions, that *his* plot had been defeated, and that it would be most difficult for him—unless, indeed, he should succeed in prevailing on Mr. M'Kenzie, the Presbyterian Scotch minister, to be party to a law or a Chancery suit—further to trouble them, relative to the trusts of their chapel. It was, therefore, resolved to wait with confidence the trial of Mr. Farmer for riot and assault, and to stand firm and fear not.

I have already informed my readers that, when the trial came on, the Antinomian lawyer was ACQUITTED, *not on the merits* of the case, but on legal technicalities and objections; and that a banquet was given at the Golden Eagle to celebrate his triumph. That dinner, as most dissenting dinners at either country or London taverns, could not end without mischief. More than forty men, of all sorts of opinions, had met together; more than eighty bottles of wine had been drank, and more than five bowls of punch had been emptied, when Mr. George Palmer proposed “a SUBSCRIPTION to try the question of whether the Independents could legally retain a Presbyterian meeting, in violation of the trusts of the deed;” and £60

were subscribed, *but not paid*, that evening. The next day Mr. Farmer and George Palmer waited on the Scotch Presbyterian minister. They were received with coldness and caution.

"What is your business, gentlemen, with *me*?" asked Mr. M'Kenzie.

"We have done ourselves the honour, Sir, of calling upon you on most important business," said Mr. Farmer.

"It ought to be not only very important, but very extraordinary, too," replied the Presbyterian minister, "to induce two such opponents, as you are known to be, gentlemen, to our cause, to call on one whom you have so long calumniated and yet affected to despise."

Mr. Farmer was overwhelmed, and George Palmer looked as astonished, as did Mr. Chapman at the poor-house.

"Indeed you are mistaken or misinformed, as far as I am concerned, Mr. M'Kenzie," said Mr. Farmer, with inconceivable audacity.

"And I'm sure as far as I am," added George Palmer.

"No, gentlemen, there is no mistake; but this is of little importance. Do me the favour just to inform me why you have called on me."

“To offer you a large and commodious chapel for Presbyterian worship,” said Mr. Farmer.

“Where?” inquired Mr. M’Kenzie.

“In this town,” replied the lawyer.

“In this town, Mr. Farmer? Why, how is that? I thought I knew all the buildings, and houses, and cottages, and barns in this town, and much more all the chapels; pray, where is it situate?”

“It is the old Presbyterian chapel, which has been *usurped* by the Independents, Mr. M’Kenzie.”

“Oh, I understand you, gentlemen, I understand you. *You were Independents* once, were you not?”

“I never was,” said Mr. Farmer.

“But you, Mr. Palmer?”

“Yes, I was *once*, Sir.”

“Well, why did you not offer me the chapel then? Why, when Independency was in high favour with you, did you say to one of my elders, ‘What’s the use of going on with your Scotch see-sawing preaching at the chapel on the hill any longer? Send Mr. M’Kenzie to the right-about, and come and join us; he is without life and soul.’ Why did you not in those days offer me the chapel?”

George Palmer had not a word to answer; even his effrontery was confounded.

“No, gentlemen,” continued Mr. M’Kenzie, “I am not to be made the scape-goat of your Independent quarrels. I know all your movements. I am as well aware as you are, and as Mr. Chapman is, that the trusts of the deed which founded the chapel have been violated, and that the trustees who hold it have no right to it. But we are lovers of peace; we are the descendants of those who laid down their lives for what they believed to be true; but who would have preferred to worship God on the hill and in the cave, to have gone to law in *civil* tribunals about *spiritual* matters. I cannot consent to mix myself up in *your* litigations.”

“But we have raised a SUBSCRIPTION of £60 towards the expenses of restoring to the Presbyterians their legal place of meeting; and only require your name, as the representative of the Presbyterians, to claim the chapel,” said Mr. Farmer.

“Mr. Farmer, listen to me. If you had raised £600, instead of £60—and if by my walking across the room I could aid your clients in *their* contest, I would not so much

as stir an inch. We differ, Sir, in some respects from the Church of England, it is true; but I would rather see the Independent meeting-house become a chapel of ease to St. Mary's, than encourage your clients in their attempts to get possession of the place, *nominally* for us, but really with the view of founding some new and modern schism. We Presbyterians are approaching the Church of England much more than we are the riotous and turbulent dissenters, Sir; and although I highly disapprove of the conduct of those who violated the trust-deed of Mrs. Timmings, yet I know too well the motives of those who have headed your subscription to approve it or to aid it."

Mr. Farmer. We do not want any aid, Mr. M'Kenzie, but simply your *name*, to claim the chapel as the legally recognised representative of the Presbyterians.

Mr. M'Kenzie. My *name*, Sir, I cannot give you; and if I were even so disposed, which I am not, it would be of no use to you, since we Presbyterians have established rules, regulations, and discipline, and do not resemble those Independent and other sects, now rising into notice, which are without laws, without fixed principles, and exposed to the perpetually

vacillating opinions or decisions of ignorant deacons, uneducated members, and too often also illiterate ministers.

Mr. M'Kenzie then rose, and with much dignity, and great coolness, bowed his visitors to the door.

"This is a sad failure," said Mr. Farmer to his disappointed client, as they walked arm-in-arm down Market-street.

"Sad indeed," replied George; "but what's to be done next?"

"Take counsel's opinion," said the lawyer; "submit a case to Mr. Serjeant Rolleston."

"Agreed to," said George Palmer—and the lawyer and the client parted.

The *acquittal* of Mr. Farmer, at the quarter sessions, on the charge made of riot and assault, was a source of great trouble to the Chapmanites; and as the county newspapers gave a short account of the dinner at the "Golden Eagle," and of the SUBSCRIPTION, the dispute at the Independent chapel excited more attention, and even general interest. My grandfather, on the one hand, acquired a sort of notoriety as "*the Vindicator of the rights of Independent deacons*;" and George Palmer was spoken of, on the other hand, as "the Reformer of Inde-

pendent abuses." So in a few months' time, whenever the subject was discussed in any society, the first question was, "Are you a Chapmanite or a Palmerite?"

The Palmerites, after meeting in an empty warehouse, then in a deserted school-room, and finally, in a whitewashed and adorned "Mews" for some months, at length raised money enough to buy a piece of ground, on which was erected one of those odd red brick buildings, which are called dissenting chapels. It was neither square, nor round, nor oblong, nor any thing else; but being built on a corner slip of land, was shorter on the one side than on the other, and was three-sided on one side, and two-sided on the other, with a vestry-room bulging out, like a wen or *goitre* on the throats of the poor inhabitants of the Swiss *Valais*. The ground of the chapel was bought very cheap, as its dimensions were too disproportionate for any thing but the sort of nondescript cause for which it was intended, and the building erected upon it.

The chapel was stated to be erected by "voluntary contributions." George Palmer undertook to beg for it in the county, and even in London; and the subscription book was headed:

—“Subscription in aid of BETHEL CHAPEL, at ———, in the county of Wilts, where the gospel is *only* preached at this new place of worship.” In order to render the chapel more attractive, George Palmer got up a band of singers, and as among the *Palmerites* there were no great performers, either vocal or instrumental, they resolved on hiring a violin, haut-boy, bassoon, and clarinette, from the band in the town, the players of which, “not being of any religion at all, had for *their* parts no objection whatever to play at *Bethel*.” But there was something yet more attractive than the music to the Palmerites, and to their increasing “cause:” and that was the latitudinarian morality of Mr. Palmer’s doctrines.

The moral law was abused, as though the Decalogue had been abolished by the Christian dispensation. John Calvin himself was a “mere forerunner” of such discoverers of truth as George Palmer. The most offensive expressions of Antinomianism, that one-eyed monster of the ooze and the mire, were made use of on every occasion by this *only* “gospel minister” twenty miles round; and *his* head deacon was heard to declare, “that for *his* part he never knew what sorrow for sin meant. He

had always been happy since he felt he was a child of God, and had no patience with people who talked about Christian experience." On another occasion, he said, "That progressive sanctification was progressive nonsense; that he was quite as holy before he was a child of God as he was then, and as holy then as he ever should be; that heaven was made for the vilest sinners, and that he *rejoiced* to know none were viler than himself."

As was the deacon, so was their chief; and one of George Palmer's favourite subjects was the *damnation of infants*. He did not hesitate to declare very often, "That many an infant of a span long was then in eternal perdition." In order to render his cause more attractive, he was the first (but not the last) to cause a board to be fastened outside his chapel, on the front door of which were written these words—

Christ's lambs fed in green pastures, and led by the side of still waters, by GEORGE PALMER, every Sunday, at eleven in the morning and six in the evening.

An Antinomian dissenter in the eastern part of London has, since the period of which I am

writing caused the same words to be painted on a similar board, and that board also to be affixed to his chapel-door. His name was Lindall.

The preaching of George Palmer was so perfectly in harmony with the most degrading passions of the human heart, and so calculated to attract the attention and secure the support of the immoral and profligate, that no one will be surprised when I say, that at the end of two years he had a much larger congregation than Mr. Chapman. One of the books from which this self-created teacher of immorality and profaneness used to make ample quotations to his vulgar but admiring listeners, was the history of a man's life, professing to be a child of God, written in doggrel verse, and of which I only remember some of the introductory lines:—

“ Early taught the Lord to fear,
Tho' I was born in Warwickshire,
Early kicked against the pricks,
Born seventeen hundred and sixty-six.”

As many who may read “ My Life,” may hope from Christian charity, “ which hopeth all things,” that the number of these Antinomians is, after all, but small, I have transcribed

from the history of these sectarians, written by Dr. James Bennett, the following passages :—

“The minor sects in England are frequently passed over as insignificant ; but, taken together, they are important. In the last annual meeting of the General Baptist connection, held July, 1838, near Halifax, they gave an account of 121 churches and 14,000 members. It is announced in the Congregational Magazine, that what are called *Hyper-Calvinistic* (in plain terms Antinomian) congregations, are omitted, and these, in London and the larger towns, amount to a considerable number. The *Sandemanians* are little known to other denominations, and are usually omitted in the statistics of dissenters, which thus become defective to the amount of the whole number of that body.”

In the course of his Antinomian canvassings for proselytes and pew-holders, George Palmer paid a visit to a small farm-house of a member of the Church of England, where the youngest daughter, only nineteen years of age, was in the last stage of a consumption. With those wily speeches and subtle snares, by which these false teachers introduce themselves and their doctrines, and which are the more dangerous

as they carry with them the semblance of piety, George obtained admission to the sick chamber. After the ordinary "palaver" of these traitors to the gospel, he asked the simple, artless Mary "If she renounced herself and her morals, her *legal* hopes, and all her righteousness and sorrow for sin, and simply believed that Christ had risen from the dead?"

Poor Mary was no theologian, and, besides, was in a state of bodily disease which did not admit of much discussion; but the eye of her enlightened and scriptural faith discovered in the question of George Palmer a confusion of terms amounting to insincerity, and she replied like a true and well-instructed member of the Church of England,

"I pray, Sir, that God may give me grace to cast away the works of darkness, and to put upon me the armour of light, that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, I may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with God and the Holy Ghost for ever."

"Then you think," replied George, "that *your* prayers are of some avail, and that it is

in answer to *your* prayers for grace that God gives his Holy Spirit to his children?"

"I know that the Scriptures declare, Sir, that if we ask we shall receive, and if we knock, the door of grace shall be opened unto us; and I pray, with the Collect for last Sunday, that I may in such wise hear, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest those Scriptures, that by patience and comfort of that Holy Word I may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, given to me, and to all poor sinners like myself, in our Saviour Jesus Christ."

"I perceive," said George, "that you are a Church of England woman; that you belong to that mother of harlots; that you are poisoned by her corruptions of the word of God, and are impregnated with her Common Prayer Book. The clergy of the Church of England are all dumb dogs, and you, I fear, my young friend, have had your soul polluted by them."

"Not *all* dumb dogs, Sir, I think," said Mary with ineffable sweetness, as the hectic flush lighted up her pale and haggard features, "for I know *one* who is not, at any rate; and I was early taught to pray that the ministers

and stewards of the mysteries of Christ may so prepare and make ready his way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient, like myself, Sir, to the wisdom of the just, that at Christ's second coming we, even such poor sinners as I am, may be found an acceptable people in his sight, who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Holy Spirit ever one God, world without end."

"So that you rely on the prayers and teachings, the intercessions and offices of the Church of England priesthood, instead of on the *finished* salvation of Jesus."

"No, no, Sir," replied Mary with emotion; "I pray to God almost every hour to arise in his power and come amongst us, and with great might succour us; that whereas, through our sins and wickedness, we are sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before us, his bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us; but then, Sir, God makes use of *means* in his dealings with his church and people, and has established a regular and orderly priesthood."

"I am sorry to see, young woman, that you are still in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity, trusting to *your* Church, *your*

priests, *their* prayers and *your* own righteousness."

"*I hope not*," said Mary with unusual fervour, "I hope not, Sir; for hourly do I pray to my God and Saviour, that, being regenerate and made his child by adoption and grace, I may be daily renewed by his Holy Spirit, through the same our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Ah, still you rely on *your own* doings, *your own* prayers, *your* daily renewals, and all *your* will-worship and piety. The children of God are born filthy, live filthy, and die filthy, and are never otherwise till they reach heaven. Not by works of righteousness that we have done—"

"No—I know that," said Mary, interrupting George Palmer before he had finished his phrase; "but then, Sir, it is written—'but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and *by the Spirit of our God.*'"

"Yes," said George Palmer; "but not your own heart washed or sanctified, or cleansed or purified; but washed in *him*, sanctified in *him*, purified in *him*. You are just like what some of those men were, whom your Church calls MARTYRS, who trusted in *their* sufferings,

and burnings, and hangings, and drownings, instead of in the simple fact, that Christ has risen from the dead.” “And yet,” said Mary, “you know, Sir, we are told that Stephen, who was one of the first Christian martyrs, was full of the Holy Ghost, and looking up stedfastly into heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God; and since I have been on this my sick bed, where I have suffered sometimes excruciating pains, it has been a source of joy to me to be able to pray—‘Grant, O Lord, that in all our sufferings here upon earth, for the testimony of thy truth, we may stedfastly look up to heaven, and by faith behold thy glory that shall be revealed; and being filled with the Holy Ghost, may learn to love and bless our persecutors, by the example of thy first martyr, St. Stephen, who prayed for his murderers to thee, O blessed Jesus.’ We have all, you know, Sir, many spiritual sufferings, temptations, and trials to go through; and we must look to Jesus, who standeth at the right hand of God, to succour all those that suffer for him.”

“Worse and worse, young woman,” exclaimed George; “you are still trusting in

your prayers, *your* inward feelings, *your* light and convictions, sufferings and trials.”

“ Oh no, Sir; not so, I assure you; for I feel that in myself I have no light, and that the Church, like myself, is in constant need of that true light which came down from heaven; and I often pray our merciful Lord, and beseech him to cast his bright beams of light upon his church, that it, being enlightened by the doctrines of his blessed apostle and evangelist St. John, may so walk in the light of God’s truth, that both I and it may at length attain to the light of everlasting life. But then you know, Sir, we are exhorted to come out from amongst them, and to touch not the unclean thing; and I never shall forget my poor dear aunt Fanny, who taught me the Collect for Innocents’ day, and made me repeat it to her every Sunday evening before I went to bed, in which we pray *to God* ‘to mortify and kill all vices in us, and to strengthen us by *his* grace, that by the innocency of our lives, and constancy of our faith even unto death, we may glorify his holy name.’ ”

Mary had scarcely time to finish the Collect, so great was the rage of George Palmer at the words, “ *innocency of our lives,*” “ *constancy of*

our faith," and "*glorify his holy name ;*" and, starting on his legs, he exclaimed — " Young woman, if you die in the belief of such lies as these, you will be eternally damned ;" and, so saying, he rushed down stairs, leaving poor Mary much agitated through his violence, but by no means shaken in her glorious and evangelical faith.

In giving this *specimen* of the doctrines and style of the chief of the *Palmerites*, I must draw, for the present, all accounts of their history to a close. They went on, sometimes increasing and sometimes decreasing, to the period of the death of their leader, and gained many adherents amongst the refuse of both provincial and city society. In the course of their chequered career, during a period of fourteen years, which was the length of time that Mr. Palmer remained their director and chief, they had many vicissitudes of fortune, as a sect, but always remained faithful to the mud and mire school of theology.

George Palmer published many pamphlets, and printed several sermons. One of the pamphlets was entitled, " FREE GRACE FOR MURDERERS," being very little better than a vindication of the blasphemies and impieties of a

man executed for murder, and who declared on the scaffold, "that he was a child of God, and had been so even when he committed the crime for which he then suffered the penalties of the law;" and the title of one of his sermons was, "REPROBATION THE GREATEST DOCTRINE OF THE GOSPEL;" in which he declared, "that, for his part, the gospel would be nothing to him, a child of God, if it did not secure to him the pre-ordained damnation of all who were not elected." There were some penny tracts also written by Palmer and his deacon against the Chapmanites; and one, called "*James Chapman arraigned at the Bar of God*," had an amazing sale. The object of the tract was to show that Mr. Chapman "did *not* preach the gospel;" and that "Bethel was the only place where the gospel trumpet had ever been sounded in that town or neighbourhood." In this manner, and by the aid of such stimulants, George Palmer contrived to keep together the sect called after his own name, and he was compelled to admit that his sectarianism and schism had been for several years no unprofitable affair to him, for his shop business, as a country dealer in all sorts of things, had *decupled* since he first began to take to preaching, until

indeed, by his subsequent conduct, he lost both health and trade.

To the "Chapmanites" I must now call the attention of my readers. Dragged into the Court of Chancery by a *bill of discovery*, filed by George Palmer, in the name of a butcher, who, as a descendant of Thomas Tompkins, one of the original trustees of the deed, claimed the Independent chapel for Presbyterian worship, on behalf of himself and all other Presbyterians, *Demurrers* were filed instead of answers—and exceptions taken and argued—and a cross bill filed—and five years consumed in doing nothing more than spending a great deal of money and exciting a still greater amount of ill-will.

My grandfather, made a party to the Chancery suit simply to annoy him, and sued at law by ejectment with John Doe and Richard Roe, and I know not who besides, became so identified with the Chapmanite party and the Independent cause, that he gradually forgot all his Episcopalian sympathies and connections, and settled down an Independent deacon. His religion was, indeed, too much of a political, worldly-minded, and unspiritual character. This is the natural consequence of political

dissenterism, especially when, as in his case, "the church and congregation" are disturbed by disputes and feuds, by controversies and legal prosecutions.

The Independent congregation, once large and prosperous, gradually dwindled down to an attendance of about one hundred and fifty persons on a Sunday morning, and of two hundred in the evening; for all dissenting congregations are better attended at night, in consequence of the taste of the female servants for seats in the front of the galleries, for loud singing, and for late hours. Mr. Chapman's income, in spite of my grandfather's increasing generosity, sensibly diminished, and in his old age this Independent minister had to contend with bodily infirmities, a dissatisfied wife, a dependent family, a quarrelsome church, a falling off congregation, a breaking down income, and, above and before all, with a want of spiritual-mindedness both in himself and his people.

One morning, at an early hour, Mrs. Chapman wrote a note off in great haste to my grandfather. It was to request his attendance, without the loss of a moment's time, as her husband had broken a blood-vessel, and the

doctor feared it might occasion his death. My grandfather, though now very old and infirm, hastened to his minister; and soon found himself in the parlour of Mr. Chapman. The accident had occurred whilst he was at breakfast, and it had been deemed wisest to place him near the fire, in an horizontal position, on the sofa. The bleeding had ceased, but his extremities were cold and almost lifeless. He was wholly unable to speak from exhaustion, but he made signs to those around him, which were easily understood.

My grandfather asked him "If he was happy in his mind?"

Mr. Chapman made a negative sign.

Mr. Rawston.—I fear, Sir, you allow the concerns of the church and its embarrassments and difficulties to torment you.

Mr. Chapman made an affirmative movement with his head.

Mr. Rawston.—But can you not cast all these cares upon the great Head of the Church?

Mr. Chapman appeared to hesitate, and then tears started from his eyes.

Mr. Rawston.—I hope, Sir, you do not make yourself unhappy as to your family. I will take care of them. Do not fear respecting

them. Your eldest girl is provided for ; your eldest boy is with me, and shall remain ; Sarah I will place as governess in some respectable family ; Louisa is about to be married ; and as to Harry, my son will bring him up to the business. So have no fear about your family.

Mr. Chapman pressed the hand of my grandfather with as much of fervour as his weakness would admit, but continued to weep bitterly.

“ Shall I pray, Sir ? ” asked my grandfather, and *Mr. Chapman* made an affirmative movement. The prayer of my grandfather evidently composed his minister’s frame, and sleep and warmth succeeded. A few hours’ repose enabled him to be moved to that chamber from which he was never to descend, though he improved for several days ; and would, it was thought, recover, unless he should have a relapse.

My grandfather was much distressed to find that when he visited *Mr. Chapman*, he was always either weeping or agitated. He could not help contrasting the death of *Mr. Chapman* with his last interview with *Mr. Seymour* ; and the contrast was so painful that, at last, he resolved on asking his minister what was the source of his anxieties and unhappiness.

“My dear friend,” said my grandfather, on his fourth visit to his pastor, “it is very evident to me, and to all around you, that your mind is not in a tranquil or happy state. I beseech you to reveal to me the cause.”

“I *will* do so,” replied the minister. “My labours amongst this church have *not* received the benediction of God. I deplore that my ministry has been so worldly-minded. I have been engrossed with the temporal and worldly affairs of the church, and have paid too little attention to the weightier matters of the law. I look in vain for seals to my ministry. My thoughts have been occupied with the deplorable law-suits, contentions, and controversies of the last ten years. I have thought more of George Palmer and his secession, than I have of my Saviour, and the souls of my hearers. I have been labouring for the meat that perisheth, and have paid too little regard to that which endureth to eternal life. I have no very serious apprehensions as to my salvation, but I am denied the privilege of spiritual communion when I most need it, and have my mind tempted and buffeted by Satan when it should be most calm and resigned. We must

live near the cross, Mr. Rawston, if we hope to have its light to conduct, or its shade to shelter us. I have lived too far from it, and my last hours are therefore dark and gloomy." And then he wept bitterly.

My grandfather now sought to console him, and entreated him to believe that these thoughts were the artifices of Satan, "the cunningly devised temptations of the devil." "No, Mr. Rawston, they are not," replied the anxious and desponding minister; "they are the reproofs of God, the hiding of his smiles, the withdrawal of his consolations. 'Let us pray!'" And he prayed with the most anxious fervour, "that his past worldly-mindedness might be forgiven, and that God would yet smile on him before he died." Hour after hour, during several days, he remained in this afflicting state. All his violent and industrious opposition to the Church of England, all his sectarian hates, all his unkindness of feeling towards those who differed from him, rose before him in all their uncharitableness and ungodliness; and it was not till the last hours of his life that his Saviour was pleased to give him some sense of pardon, and some joyful foretaste of heaven. He died

suddenly, without a moment in which to say "farewell," for he broke another blood-vessel, and was suffocated.

My grandfather survived him only a few months. Age and asthma conducted *him* also, to the house appointed for all living. His latter days were even less serene and less hopeful than those of his minister. But my grandfather spoke little of his feelings; and having lost my grandmother some three years previous to his own death, lived much alone, and died in the middle of the night, when only my father and I were present. He left a considerable legacy to the chapel, endowing it with £50 a-year, and the bulk of his property to my father and my aunt Mary, but on condition that they should continue to frequent the Independent chapel, and remain members; a condition very unlike his general kind-hearted character, and yet which was written by himself, as though to give more force to its obligations. If my father or aunt Mary had been disposed to contest the clause, they might easily have done so, but they had too much respect for his memory to attempt this; and as they had both been brought up dissenters from the period of sixteen and seventeen years of age, they were

satisfied with following in the footsteps of their deceased parent. For, although my father and mother, when my grandfather became an Independent, were at an age when young persons are capable of understanding and appreciating the religion of the Church of England and the character of sectarians, yet the habit of attending at one place of worship, mixing in the same society, and identifying oneself with the parties and disputes arising out of, or connected with it, begets in time a species of affection, not to say preference or respect. This was the case with my father and aunt Mary. They were dissenters because they *were* dissenters. They knew nothing about the why or the wherefore. From never hearing the Church Service, my father imagined at last that he did not like it; and from knowing one fox-hunting clergyman at a village four miles off, who was *always* cited by *all* the dissenters as a sample of *all* the rest, he at last imagined that such was really the case, and was literally surprised when he heard sometimes of the benevolence and genuine piety of the Rev. Mr. Montague, the worthy successor of good Mr. Seymour. This was not the case with dear aunt Mary, as we shall see hereafter.

When my grandfather died, on opening his Will a letter was found inside, in his handwriting, addressed to my father. It was worded as follows:—

“My dear George,
 “When you read this letter, I shall have been summoned to my great account. I regret, deeply regret, I deplore, deeply deplore, that I ever aspired to the office of churchwarden. It led to the triumph of my pride over my reason and religion, and induced me to leave the ministry of Mr. Seymour. I do not regret the Church, but I regret the separation from *his* influence and exhortations. I do not less deplore my having sought for and obtained the post of senior deacon at the chapel of my late friend, Mr. Chapman. I do not regret joining the dissenters, but I deplore that I took office. My connection with the chapel of Mr. Chapman *as one of its officers* has led to great loss of time, temper, money, religious feelings, and true piety. I have left undone the things I ought to have done, and have done those things I ought not to have done. My Will will show you that it is my desire you should remain a member, as well as your sister, of the Independent chapel, now without a minister, and in a declining state both as to funds and members; but one of my

last requests is, that you will NEVER BECOME EITHER A TRUSTEE OR A DEACON.

“ I am, my dear George,

“ Your dying father,

“ JAMES RAWSTON.”

Thus my father's future life was chalked out for him beforehand. He was to be an Independent, and a member; to contribute to the dissenting chapel, and become “one of its pillars;” but not to accept the posts of either trustee or deacon. My father, who inherited some of the petulance, irritability, love of power, and vanity of my grandfather, viewed with some annoyance this sort of prescription, and especially the clause in the will; but his manufactory and politics were quite enough to occupy his time; and though no man was more regular in his attendance at the meeting on Sunday, both in the morning and evening, yet as he saw himself excluded by his father's will, and by his last request contained in his last letter, from any station of importance in the “Church of England,” as well as from any post at the “Independent Meeting,” he did no more than his strict duty, *i. e.* not being a truly religious man, at least at my grandfa-

ther's death, he confined his religion to the Sunday. Habituated from the age of sixteen to dissenting idioms, phrases, habits, and dialogues, he was a dissenter without knowing it, and found himself sadly embarrassed when questioned as to *his* motives for separating from the Church of England.

On one of these occasions, the following conversation took place between my father and a respectable Episcopalian magistrate, who called to ask him for his contribution towards the PAROCHIAL schools:—

Magistrate. I have called, Mr. *Rawston*, to request your subscription towards our parish schools. We have many applicants for admission, our funds are exhausted, we are in debt to our treasurer, and are obliged to make an appeal to all who approve of the religious education of our rising generation.

My Father. Very true, Sir; but you see we belong to the Independent chapel, and support our school there.

Magistrate. But, I think, Mr. *Rawston*, that is only a *Sunday* school, whereas, you know, ours are charity schools for all the week, as well as for Sunday. Besides, we clothe the children, and you do not.

My Father. Yes, Sir, but then you see I cannot approve of the Church schools, since I am a dissenter.

Magistrate. But what is there in our schools you do not approve of, Mr. Rawston? We teach the boys to read, to write, to keep their fathers' account books, to fear God and honour the king, and to do unto others as they would wish others to do to them.

My Father. Oh! that's all very good, Sir; I say nothing against that; but then you know you are Episcopalians, and we are dissenters, and therefore I cannot support your schools.

Magistrate. Why not, Mr. Rawston? Do we teach our children any thing you do not approve? Do you know our Church Catechism? Is there any thing wrong in it? As to the Bible, I know you teach that in your schools. So do we. There is no such thing as an Episcopalian A B C, or Episcopalian writing, or Episcopalian arithmetic; and as to the dear girls, why we instruct them, in addition to what the boys learn, in needle-work, and surely a poor girl, whatever church she may belong to, should know how to mend her own stockings.

My Father. Oh! certainly Sir, certainly; but then, you see, we have dissenting schools,

and I, as a dissenter, support them ; and you have Church of England schools, and you, as an Episcopalian, support them. That's perfectly fair, is it not, Sir ?

The Magistrate. Yes, very fair indeed ; but then, you know, Mr. Rawston, there is this difference in the two cases : our schools are *daily* schools, and parochial schools, and the children of the poor of all religious denominations may obtain admission for their children, provided they are well-conducted people ; whereas your school is only a *Sunday* school, and you simply give them religious instruction of a Sunday morning an hour before you take them into your chapel. There is then no similarity in the cases.

My Father. Still yours is an Episcopalian school, and I am *not* an Episcopalian.

The Magistrate. But *why* are you not an Episcopalian ? I might ask, Mr. Rawston, if I were not afraid of appearing rude. What is there in the hierarchy of our Church that displeases you ?

My Father. Oh ! I am displeased with nothing ; but it is not my way of thinking, that's all.

The Magistrate. Do you think then, Mr.

Rawston, that there were no bishops in the first ages of the church ?

My Father. No, I don't say that, because I believe there were ; but to cut the matter short, Sir, here's a guinea for the schools, but put my subscription down as that of "A FRIEND ;" for, being a dissenter, I should not like to appear to be "ratting."

The Magistrate. Well, Mr. Rawston, I accept your guinea for the poor children ; but if *I* belonged to any sect that would think I "*rat-
ted*" because I subscribed to a parish charity school, I do think I should "*rat*," as you call it, the next day.

And then the magistrate took leave. I think it was well he did so, for my father began to get impatient, and he might have asked the magistrate to "refund."

There was in my father's lifetime, as there is now, an amazing degree of ignorance among dissenters as to their *alleged* motives for separating from the Church of England. In the majority of cases, indeed, this is not surprising, since the mass of frequenters of dissenting chapels belong to the lower classes of society ; but this state of ignorance is scarcely less to be remarked among the middling ranks of

their members. I have frequently asked dissenting tradesmen why they did not attend their parish church; and the only answer they could give was, that they had been *brought up* to go to the chapel. I am aware that it may be replied that multitudes of Churchmen could give no other answer to a similar inquiry, why they attended church, but this I cannot admit. It *would be* a satisfactory answer to say, because he belonged to the *national* religion, whereas those who dissent or separate from a *national* religion are bound to give their reasons for so doing. If Independency were the religion of the land, and I were an Episcopalian, I should be bound to give my reasons for separating from it. Not indeed that the clergy of our church, and the fathers and mothers of our families would not do well to instruct the rising generation much more than they have hitherto done, in the evidences in favour of Episcopacy, but simply, I maintain, that a Churchman gives a satisfactory and logical answer when he says, "I am a Churchman because I belong to the religion of the country;" whereas a dissenter, who replies that he is a Separatist because he has been brought up to be one, gives an answer that is illogical

and absurd. What would be thought and said of a man in this country, who, instead of dressing according to the national custom of Great Britain, with a shirt, stockings, boots, trousers, a waistcoat, a coat, a cravat, hat, and gloves, should walk up and down our public streets and attend to his ordinary business and occupations in the costume of Turkey, or of the East, and when asked why he thus violated all the customs of his own country, and rendered himself singular and ridiculous, should say, Because I was brought up by my father so to do? Should we not reply to him, that the mere fact that his father had so brought him up was not an adequate or valid reason? The national dress of Great Britain is suited to the climate, to the food, to the exercise, to the habits of British people; and the man who thus violated the customs of his country, simply because his father had done so, would be a subject for just and well-merited derision. Well then, apply this to the national religion of Great Britain. The *national* religion of this country is the Catholic (not Roman) faith. From the introduction of Christianity into this country, with but few deviations, it has been the same. It was *the* Christianity of

the fathers of the Church as handed down to them from the apostles ; and although at different epochs in the history of our nation, attempts have been made by Papists and Puritans to change the national religion, God, in his mercy, has defeated them all ; and in 1841, as in my father's time, the national religion of Great Britain is *the* Catholic faith, the Catholic church. It is enough, then, for a Churchman to reply, when asked " Why he is a Churchman ? " that he is a Churchman because he sees no reason for not belonging to his national church. But it is not enough for a dissenter to say that he is a dissenter from the national religion because he has been so brought up by his parents. The *onus* of proving that the national religion is not a true faith and a Christian church, rests with those who separate from it. Not, indeed, that a Churchman will object to supply the evidences for his faith and his church on proper occasions, and when the cause of truth can be benefited thereby ; but on ordinary occasions it is sufficient for him to say, " I am a Churchman, because I see no reason for rejecting the national religion. " I have called the attention of my readers to this subject in this place, not

only because my respected father never could give his reasons for not being a Churchman, but because he had no sort of notion why he was a dissenter, except that he had been brought up to attend a dissenting meeting-house; but I also refer to it because the majority of dissenters in 1841 are *wholly ignorant* of Church history. They *practically* dissent from a church of which *theoretically* they know nothing; and oppose her hierarchy, her clergy, her discipline, her worship, and the support to which they are entitled as the clergy of the *national church*, without being able to give any other reason than that *they* attend at Mr. Gubbins's meeting, or are members at Mr. Roberts's chapel.

That such men as Dr. Wardlaw should be able to patch up, in language the most refined, and with a talent which none can dispute, the cause of dissenterism, I do not attempt to deny; but out of the large assemblies which crowded to hear his discussions, not one out of twenty of the dissenters present, understood either his facts or his reasonings. The majority of the *orthodox* dissenters are *hereditary separatists*. The majority of the heterodox dissenters are political unbelievers. Their *poli-*

tics are the moving cause of their agitation and dissent; and their unbelief gives a pungency and venom to their views and opinions. *They* labour for the meat that perisheth; they sow to the wind, and in all cases, speaking spiritually, they reap the whirlwind. The least loyal, the least moral, the least social, the least religious body of dissenters, is undoubtedly the sect of SOCINIANS; and they are consequently the *most* vehement enemies of the Established Church. The most loyal, the most moral, the most social, and the most religious body in the land, next to the truly Christian members of the Church of England, are unquestionably the WESLEYAN METHODISTS; and they are so near the church in their views and practices, that I still hope a union will some day be effected. If a dissenter be asked, "Where were the Independents before the time of *Robert Brown*, in 1580?" he is taught to reply by the historian of dissenters: "It is generally supposed, that the *idea* of Independency first occurred to one who had not wisdom to pursue the plan; but it is more probable that many were cultivating in secret the system which was first announced to the public in a crude form, by *Robert Brown*, from whom the earliest Inde-

pendents were called Brownists." Here then is the date of the schism. In the 16th century, one *Robert Brown*, having more pride than grace, set up a sect called after his own name, the "*Brownists*;" and we are required to believe that to *him* was committed the task of establishing the first Gospel Church in Britain. Yet for centuries previously, the Catholic Church in England had existed independent of the Roman See, and for many ages we hear little or nothing of any exercise of Popish jurisdiction in this country. The Bible was read, the gospel was preached, and multitudes of glorified spirits who now surround the Throne of God, had died in the faith of the Church of England. Into that church indeed great errors had crept, which were swept away by the Reformation, and by the separation of the Papists, who left the old Catholic Church in England, and became Romanists. From the time of the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, to the institution of the first Bishop of Rome, Linus, in the year of our Lord 58, there has been a regular succession of Bishops, 153 in number, to the period when the present primate of England was appointed in 1828; as there has been in Ireland a like regular succes-

sion of Bishops, 149 in number, from the same apostles to the present archbishop. A Church-of-England-man therefore, when asked, "From whence is your Church?" points to his Christian national heraldry, to the glorious line of succession from the first apostles to the present hour; and says, "These are the title-deeds of my church to its glorious inheritance of millions of *departed* saints, as to other millions following in their footsteps;" whilst the dissenter dates his creed from the 16th century, and is satisfied with having one Robert Brown as the authority and founder of his schism.

My father knew none of these things, and I must do him the justice to add, did not care to know them. He supported dissent, because he had been brought up to do so, and because his father wished him to remain a dissenter; for as to the clause in my grandfather's will, making the inheritance of a portion of his property depend on his children remaining dissenters, my father knew very well it was of no legal avail, and was only intended as a strong, though very awkward, mode on the part of the testator of expressing his wishes. Though my father was ignorant of dissenting controversies, and the alleged reasons for their separation

from the Church of England, this was not the case with my mother, who, as I have said at the commencement of this work, belonged to the *General Baptists*, though she frequently attended at the Independent meeting during the lifetime of Mr. Chapman, and there first attracted the notice of the son of the then senior deacon. The Baptist congregation, under the pastoral care of Mr. Cross, was what is styled in dissenting phraseology, "*a poor cause*," *i. e.* there were few members, few hearers, and a great lack of funds. But what they did not possess in numbers they made up in zeal; and whenever I went to hear Mr. Cross preach, he was sure to bring in the phrases of "non-scriptural practice of our Pædobaptist brethren," "the absurdity of affusion," "the ridiculous custom of sprinkling infants," and other similar terms of *brotherly* contempt or dissenting rivalry! My mother was a great stickler for the "*necessity*" for "immersion," and had a profound contempt for what she had been instructed to term "throwing a handful of water on *an inanimate lump of living clay*," for such was the favourite designation for the baptism of infants. It offended her greatly to be called an "*Anabaptist*," as her Episcopalian

neighbours sometimes would do ; and once when a clergyman of the Church of England questioned her right to the term "*Baptist*," since the church to which he belonged, the Church of Rome, and indeed all Christian churches, administered the ordinance of baptism (though in various forms), and proposed to call her a "Rebaptizer," she became quite indignant, and insisted that she could date HER denomination from the time of Luther. "And I can establish that the practice of *infant* baptism existed," replied the clergyman, "in the first century ; that it was generally established in the Christian churches before the time of Irenæus, in the year 178; and in the time of Cyprian, in 250, the question was only, whether infants ought to be baptized before the eighth day after their birth. As infants had been admitted by circumcision into covenant with God under the older dispensation ; and as our Lord had shown his favour to them by taking them in his arms, blessing them, and saying, that of such is the kingdom of heaven ; and as it is related that the apostles baptized whole households of their converts, the church always believed that the children of Christians ought not to be left in the condition of heathens, but received at once into the Christian body by

holy baptism, and instructed to walk worthy of the high gifts which they had received."

My mother "*defied*" the clergyman to point out any text of Scripture in favour of infant baptism; but her learned and pious opponent soon demonstrated that professing Gentiles and their children, were stated by the Holy Scriptures to be placed in the same relation to Abraham, and to the promise made to him, as the Jews and their children were; and that the Gentiles and their children were also placed by the Scriptures in connection with the ordinance of baptism, as the Jews and their children were with that of circumcision.

This mode of argumentation was new to my mother, and she quitted that portion of the controversy to engage in the other, in which she hoped to be more successful, *viz.* the question of *immersion*. "But then," said my mother, "you know, Sir, that we believe in ADULT baptism, and in adult baptism by *immersion*."

"And so do we," replied the clergyman.

"You, Sir! then you are not a Churchman," answered my mother with some warmth; "you are all Sprinklers."

"Pardon me, madam, if you had been a little more conversant with the history of our Church, as well as with that of the ordinance

about which we are conversing, you would not have fallen into this error.

“There were two modes of baptizing in the primitive churches, and these modes continue to exist. One of the fullest and most interesting accounts of the celebration of baptism in those days occurs in the writings of Justin Martyr. ‘We shall relate,’ he says, ‘the manner in which those who are renewed through Christ dedicate themselves to God. As many as are persuaded, and believe what is taught and said by us (Christians), and promise that they will live accordingly, are instructed with prayer and fasting to beseech from God the remission of their sins; we also fasting and praying along with them. Then we bring them to a place where there is water, and they are regenerated in the same mode of regeneration as that with which we were ourselves regenerated; for then they are washed in water in the name of God the Father and Lord of all, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost, for Christ himself said, ‘Except ye be regenerated, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.’ This was the manner, madam, in which all converts from heathenism were admitted into the Christian church, and made partakers of all its blessed promises and pri-

vileges. This was adult baptism, and by immersion. But when infants were baptized, they received the ordinance of affusion; and the parents or godfathers made the same engagements in their names which, if they lived to the years of from ten to twelve, they afterwards took upon themselves at the solemn rite of *confirmation*. And now, madam, if you will allow me the use of a Prayer Book for a few minutes, I will show you that our Church, faithful to the traditions and customs of the primitive churches, still administers both infant and adult baptism, and by affusion to the one, and by immersion (sometimes) to the others."

As my mother did not possess, and never had done, a Prayer Book, "*though she highly disapproved of the Church service,*" the servant was sent to a church neighbour to borrow one, which, on being produced, should have convinced her of *three* facts: first, that it is schism to separate from a Christian national church without knowing why or wherefore; second, that the Church of England directs "*the minister to pour water on the infant*" when infant baptism is resorted to, at the same time authorizing him to "*dip it in the water discreetly and warily*" (if the child be well enough to endure it); and third, that when any persons

of riper years desire to be baptized, they shall be previously examined as to their instruction in the principles of the Christian religion, exhorted to prepare themselves with prayer and fasting for the receiving of this holy sacrament, and, if found fit, shall receive it at the font publicly; and after a public profession of faith, the priest shall take each person to be baptized, and placing him conveniently by the font, shall *dip him in the water*, or pour water upon him."

"Thus, madam," said the clergyman, "you perceive that you have separated from the Church of England because you approve of adult baptism, a confession of faith, and baptism by immersion, and yet that very church administers this sacrament as you approve."

Of course, my mother got out of her difficulty by declaring, "that there were *many other* reasons for her not being a Churchwoman," the whole of which were about as logical, as the one which the clergyman had thus examined and refuted.

When my father fell in love with Miss Amelia Stennett, he was only twenty years of age, and only eighteen summers had passed over her head. She was a very pretty girl, the daughter of a retired tradesman, and would

have at her father's death a fortune of two or three thousand pounds. My paternal grandfather was by no means displeased with his son's choice; and my father's sister, aunt Mary, pronounced Amelia Stennett "to be one of the most suitable persons her brother could have selected." My dear old grandmother Rawston regretted Miss Stennett was a dissenter, but she "hoped that her son George would one day become a member of the Church of England." The father of Miss Amelia, my maternal grandfather, was at first opposed to the union, on religious grounds, or rather on dissenting objections. He asked young Rawston "if he had examined the question which divided the Baptists from the Independents." And my father answered in the negative. "Then," replied my mother's father, "you must go through the whole controversy with me, and I will instruct you." Of course my father consented, though he would greatly have preferred to have spent the long winter evenings in miscellaneous chat with the ladies, to reading aloud what he styled "dry treatises on dull subjects." My maternal grandfather tried very hard to prevail on his daughter's lover "to become a Baptist;" but the young man contrived to postpone the subject

from month to month till he was so well liked by Amelia, and thought so eligible a match for her daughter by her mother, that, Baptist or no Baptist, he became the son-in-law. It was nevertheless stipulated that my mother should attend the ordinance of the Lord's Supper at Mr. Cross's, and that the children of her marriage "should *not* be christened," but should be left to decide for themselves at mature age whether they would be Independents, and receive baptism by christening, or Baptists, and receive the ordinance by immersion. By this unholy arrangement, which deprived me by anticipation of the blessings accompanying an introduction into the church of Christ by the reception of that ordinance as an infant, I was condemned to remain in the same condition as the child of a Pagan or a Jew, neither receiving the external and visible sign, nor the internal and invisible advantages arising from the performance of this first duty of a Christian parent. My father did *once* express his regret at his having been a party to such a contract; but my mother silenced him by saying, "If you had not, I should not have married you."

The death of Mr. Chapman and my grandfather led to many changes in the dissenting

squabbles of my native town. The Chancery suits were stopped, as bills of revivor became necessary on both sides; and neither the Palmerites nor the Chapmanites had funds for the lawyers. The attorneys, tired of waiting term after term, sent in their bills of costs to their respective clients; and my father had £370. 6s. 8d. to pay out of my grandfather's personal property, as *his* portion of Lawyer Brooksbank's bill. As to Mr. Farmer's costs, he had to bring an action against George Palmer before he could obtain a shilling; who revenged himself by taxing Farmer's bill, and reducing the amount from £406 to £230. This £230 was in addition, however, to £190 he had previously received; as was the £370. 6s. 8d., paid by my father on behalf of his deceased parent to Mr. Brooksbank, a supplementary bill to one of £280, paid by my grandfather in his lifetime. My paternal grandfather, who lived to see, not only my father's marriage, but also some of my earliest years, made a generous provision for myself, independent of my father's property; and thus left him free as to the business or profession to which he would bring me up.

The Chapmanites' meeting-house, after the death of the former pastor until some months

subsequent to the death of my grandfather, had no settled minister. The then dissenting academies sent what are called "*Supplies*," in the shape of students, who lodged at poor Mr. Mott's, the plumber, still alive (and who was after my grandfather's death the *only* deacon), and received one guinea per Sabbath for two sermons, a prayer-meeting lecture, a Thursday-evening sermon, and sundry visits to the sick members. Amongst the students so sent during nearly twelve months, Mr. Gill, Mr. Tite, and Mr. Hawthorne, were the decided favourites. Mr. Gill, who was black, steady, and heavy, was the favourite with the old people. Mr. Tite, who was red, frisky, and poetical, was "an uncommon favourite" with the young and other ladies, at least from fourteen to forty; whilst Mr. Hawthorne "carried all before him" with the men, and the few other thinking people of the congregation. Mr. Gill was pronounced to be "*wonderful in prayer*." Mr. Tite was "a sweet man among young people." And Mr. Hawthorne was "an out-and-out dissenter, who would be a match for them all." The objection to Mr. Gill was, "that he had a hesitating manner when preaching, which sent young people to sleep." The objection to Mr. Tite was, "that he was *rather* too flighty for a

minister of the gospel, and too fond of laughing and jokes." And the objections to Mr. Hawthorne were, that his sermons were too long, and that he was "*not quite sound* about baptism;" or, in plain terms, that he could not believe but that both children and adults ought to receive baptism. There were some, however, who said, "that perhaps this was a good thing, as Mr. Hawthorne might draw away members from Mr. Cross's congregation." My father was a Hawthorneite, not for the last reason mentioned, but because he was the only one of the three who had any pretensions to be a gentleman. At last the election was fixed. Each candidate was invited down to preach in rotation two sermons; and the man who, on the balloting-day, should have the greatest number of votes, not of the congregation, but of the members, was to receive A CALL. Mr. Gill's two probationary sermons were preached on practical subjects; Mr. Tite's, on two doctrinal questions; and Mr. Hawthorne took one historical from the Old Testament (his enemies said to show his learning), and one doctrinal from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans. Then came the canvassing. The old and respectable people were not very active in Mr. Gill's interest, and so he was out of the

question ; the young ladies in white were indefatigable for “ *dear Mr. Tite,*” and persuaded their “ma’s” to promise to double their subscriptions if he should be elected, and many of their “pa’s” to promise “to take an additional sitting for their servants if he should be the fortunate candidate ;” and, in fact, Mr. Tite appeared at one time likely to carry all before him. But it so happened, that an *anonymous* letter came by post to one of the chiefs of Mr. Hawthorne’s party four days before the one fixed for voting, which exercised a great influence against the unfortunate Mr. Tite, and secured the election of his more favoured opponent.

The letter was as follows : (*a true dissenting epistle*).

“ Dear Brother,

“ Although, *from motives of delicacy*, I conceal my name, you will excuse the liberty I take in addressing a few lines to you, on the all-important subject of the selection by your church of a suitable pastor. I would not for the world say any thing to disparage any of the candidates, all of whom I *hope* are sincere believers. At the same time, I suppose you are not ignorant that Mr. T . . . *was* to have married Mr. Thomas Wilson’s daughter, of Shrewsbury, but has not done so. Whether he has broken his engagement, or has been thought too light and trifling for a minister

of the gospel, I cannot tell ; but all I know is, that at Shrewsbury it is much talked of, and by no means to his advantage. Character, you know, dear brother, is every thing. I have no doubt Mr. T . . . is a good young man, but who can say he has the stability of Mr. H ? I suppose dear Mr. G . . . is out of the question. Praying that you may be guided in your choice,

“ I am, dear brother,

“ Your sincere friend,

“ AN INDEPENDENT.”

This letter was shown about as a *pretended great secret*, and *very confidentially*, the *first* day to the members “ of our church and congregation :” but on the *second* day one of the young ladies in white got hold of it, made a copy, and sent that copy to Mr. Tite for his explanations. Unfortunately for Mr. Tite, he was not at “ the college ” when the letter reached, but had gone into Sussex, to “ SUPPLY ” for a Sunday. As no reply came, on the morning of election his opponents said “ that silence was consent,” and that all was true. My readers, therefore, will not be surprised to learn that at the close of the ballot the numbers were—

For Mr. Gill 7

For Mr. Tite 14

For Mr. Hawthorne 20

Total 41

Every member voted—not one was absent; and, therefore, the recorded opinions of the church were twenty for Mr. Hawthorne and twenty-one for the two other candidates; but still Mr. Hawthorne was elected. Two days after the election had terminated, a letter was received from Mr. Tite, relating the *whole of the circumstances* as to Miss Thomas Wilson and her renowned papa, and shewing that no fault whatever could be imputed to the unsuccessful candidate at the late contest. This letter threw the young ladies in white into most fearful agitation, and they nearly all vowed “that if another ballot did not take place, they, and their ‘pa’s’ and ‘ma’s’ would all leave the chapel, and join the Presbyterians.” I do not say that their “pa’s” and “ma’s” had authorized the whole of them to make these declarations, at least, to such an extent; but the effect which they were *intended* to produce was attained, and the then only deacon, Mr. Mott, quite an old man, was persuaded to call a special church-meeting, “to consider the reports spread abroad, prior to the late election of a pastor, injurious to the character of one of the candidates, as well as to hear his reply thereto, and to decide on ulterior measures.” The Hawthorneites, believing that this was a

manœuvre to delay the arrival of their favourite, and perhaps to annul his election, sent off one of their number to London by the Salisbury coach, then frequently driven by an Independent minister who resided there, and who, dressed in top-boots and a fashionable box-coat, officiated as coachman, and who has subsequently distinguished himself by his ultra-dissenterism both at home and in *France*. Mr. Hawthorne arrived the day before the special church-meeting was convoked, and immediately visited "the heads of the church." Foreseeing that another election was more than probable, he addressed himself particularly to the members who had voted for Mr. Gill, and entreated their support. The meeting was noisy, vulgar, and worldly, and the young ladies in white were ranged in the aisle along which the members passed to the vestry-room, with pieces of paper and cards, on which were written "VOTE FOR THE REV. MR. TITE AND THE SPIRITUAL INTERESTS OF THE RISING GENERATION!" After three hours of angry discussion as to the influence which the anonymous letter, signed "*An Independent*," had produced at the last election—as to the charge made against Mr. Tite, his refutation—and the conduct of Miss Wilson and Mr. Thomas Wilson—and as

to the right which the church had to proceed to another election, it was finally decided by a majority of two, that another election should at once take place, and that the successful candidate should immediately be informed thereof, and invited to preach until he should be "*regularly*" ordained, by his most irregularly ordained brethren in the Independent ministry. Before the ballot took place, the friends of Mr. Tite approached the supporters of Mr. Gill, and observed, that as it was evident that *their* candidate had no chance of being returned, they hoped that his name would be withdrawn, and that the votes they *would* have given to their own candidate, would now be transferred to Mr. Tite.

"We have resolved," said the leader of the Gill party, "to withdraw the name of our candidate, but we shall transfer our votes to Mr. Hawthorne." This settled the contest; for though three of Mr. Hawthorne's supporters were not present, and all Mr. Tite's were, yet the ballot was much in favour of the former; there being

For Mr. Hawthorne ..	24
For Mr. Tite	14
	—
Total	38
	—

Though Mr. Hawthorne heard the result with great satisfaction, yet he knew too well the mischief which young ladies in white, who canvass against their ministers at dissenting tea parties, can produce, either to despise their numbers or their ages. He resolved, therefore, to learn all their names and addresses, and wait upon the whole of them. To one he said, "he hoped he was not objectionable to them *personally*," and she replied, "By no means, Sir; we think your *person* more agreeable than the other candidates." To another he said, "he counted upon her aid in the Sunday-school." To a mamma with seven daughters he said, "I look to you, madam, to help me to find a wife." And by so flattering one, coaxing another, and beseeching all, he contrived to soften down much of their animosity, and the major part agreed "to give him a trial." In return, however, for their condescension, he was obliged to promise "not to preach so long;" to have "a band of singers as they had at the Baptist chapel;" "to deliver a course of lectures to young people;" and to encourage "religious tea parties," as well, alas! as to frequent them. He also was to have a "TEXT BOX," into which these Independent theologians were to drop texts of Scripture, from which poor Mr. Haw-

thorne was to preach, *nolens volens*. This is only a specimen, however, of all the engagements he had to contract as an *Independent* minister.

The day of his *ordination*, as it is styled by the dissenters, was at last fixed, and all round the country it was announced, in true dissenting placards, that

“ On Thursday next, June 14,
THE REV. WILLIAM HAWTHORNE
will be Ordained
to the office of Pastor of the
INDEPENDENT CHURCH AND CONGREGATION
assembling at the
INDEPENDENT CHAPEL AT ———
when

The Rev. MR. JUGG, of Wimborne, will ask the usual
Questions, and give the Charge,

The Rev. MR. SNIBB, of London, will offer up the
Ordination Prayer,

The Rev. MR. TWIGG, of Salisbury, will preach to the Church,
and many other

Ministers will be present to assist in laying on hands ;
and in the Evening,

The Rev. DR. BOLD, of Liverpool, will preach to the
Church and Congregation.

Service to begin in the morning at eleven, and in the evening
at half-past six.”

———

“ N.B. *There will be an excellent Ordinary at the ‘ GOLDEN EAGLE ’ at one o’clock, and a Tea-Party in the Vestry and Chapel-ground at five o’clock. Tickets to the Dinner, three shillings and sixpence, and to the Tea, eighteen pence ; or four shillings and sixpence to both.*”

I recollect that my father kept open-house that day, and even my mother, though a General Baptist, took a vast deal of interest in all that was passing. As my father's house was by far the best of all, of either the members or congregation, he was asked if he had a spare bed for THE REV. DR. BOLD, who was the great-gun of the festival, and was reserved for the *evening* service. My father said, "he should be most happy to receive the doctor," and great preparations were made for his reception. Though but a lad, I was allowed to sit up to supper; and as a proof of the *very* brotherly terms on which the dissenters lived in "our town," my father, at the special request of the new minister, Mr. Hawthorne, invited the two Baptist and the Presbyterian ministers to supper. The supper table was, for the first time in my life, and I may say in that of my father's, surrounded by *nearly all* the teachers of multiform dissent in our town; but as the animal portion of the entertainment was really sumptuous, and the libations of wine, and *spirits and water*, more than plentiful, the feast of reason was principally circumscribed to low jokes against the Church of England, to miscellaneous scandal about absent brothers (*dear* brothers), and to little unkind hits at each other, *i. e.* of Bap-

tists against Independents, and both against Presbyterians. The only discussion which was of any great interest, was brought about by the inquiry of my father, addressed to the Rev. Dr. Bold, of "Pray, Doctor, what was the mode of ORDINATION pursued in the primitive Christian churches, and what difference is there between the ordination service of the Independents, Presbyterians, and Baptists?"

Doctor Bold began by premising that the ritual of the Church of England for ordaining priests and deacons was *improper and unscriptural*: why or wherefore, it did not suit him to state; and Messrs. Hawthorne, Jugg, Snibb, Twigg, M'Kenzie, Cross, and Mountain, were all of opinion that "nothing could be worse than the Church of England service." I longed to have their reasons; but a youth of fourteen did not dare to do more than whisper in his mother's ear, "*I wish they would say why.*"

Doctor Bold. In the early history of Non-conformists, Mr. Rawston, we read that the Presbyterians ordained several candidates for the ministry at the same time, and consequently not in the presence of those of whom they were entrusted with the charge.

Mr. M'Kenzie. This was not the case, Doctor, with the Scotch Presbyterians, for

they always had their minister ordained in the presence of the flock.

Doctor Bold. I am aware of that, Sir; but the English Presbyterians retained the practice of ordaining several at a time — a practice which had its origin in the customs and ceremonies of English Episcopacy. When Calamy and six others wished to be ordained, the ceremony was performed in Dr. Annesly's meeting, in Little St. Helen's. Dr. Annesly began with prayer; Mr. Alsop preached; Dr. Williams prayed, and delivered a lecture on the *nature* of ordination, read the names of those to be ordained, and their qualifications and testimonials, then asked one of the candidates to make his confession of faith, put the questions to him out of the Directory of the Westminster Assembly, and prayed over his head. The same plan was pursued with regard to each of the other six candidates; and after a general prayer by Mr. Sylvester, a solemn charge, a psalm and a prayer, the service was terminated. It lasted from ten to six. Such ordinations now would be deemed tiresome.

Mr. Hawthorne. The same custom prevailed among the dissenters of Cheshire, of several ministers being ordained at the same time, and not, as is now the case, in the specific place

of worship in which they were afterwards to teach and preach.

Mr. Mountain (the strict communionist teacher). Oh yes, the customs in all Independent and other Congregational churches have very much varied; whereas the Church of England has always gone on in its old jog-trot style, paying no attention to the signs of the times, and to the demands for changes in every thing.

My Father. I confess, Mr. Mountain, I am not very fond of changes in religious matters. Religion is not like a coat, which may be cut in this shape or that, according to the taste of the tailor, or the newest fashion. The character of God being always the same, and the condition of the church militant being substantially so too, I am rather fond of sameness, as it is called, in all such matters.

Mr. Snibb. I think, Dr. Bold, the Independents always maintained the necessity for the ordination taking place in the face of the congregation of which the minister was to be the pastor. And the primitive Independents objected to the imposition of hands, as too much resembling the custom of the Church of England.

My Father. It seems to me, Mr. Snibb, that the Independents ought to have been able

to give a better reason than whether a religious custom was or was not resembling that of the Church of England. Surely the real question is, whether such and such a custom and ceremony be or be not *scriptural*.

Mr. Snibb. Yes, certainly, Mr. Rawston; but you know we dissenters are fully aware that at least the Church of England is not scriptural.

Again I longed to ask why; for neither Mr. Snibb nor Dr. Bold seemed at all overburthened with either facts or arguments.

Mr. Cross. In our (the Baptist) denomination, the method originally bore a resemblance to that of the Independents: but still there were some differences. The ordination Baptist service began by reading the Scriptures; then by prayer for the church, its offices, the presence of God, and the aid of his grace; then an explanation followed, on the office of an elder and of deacons; then a vindication of the Baptist mode of ordination. After this, the church members voted by show of hands, to testify they had selected their new minister. The new minister then announced his spiritual intentions as pastor; and after a short prayer, the ministers present laid their right hands on the new pastor's head, and pronounced him to be elder, bishop, or overseer. A prayer,

hymn, and sermon followed ; and deacons were ordained in the very same manner.

Mr. M'Kenzie. But this mode of ordination was objected to, brother Cross, by a portion of your body, who protested against the form of ordination, which was, " Brother So-and-so, WE DO, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the consent of this church, ORDAIN THEE to be an elder, bishop, or overseer of this church of Jesus Christ." You are doubtless aware that the *right* of any ministers to ORDAIN another was by them questioned, and even objections were made to any imposition of hands.

Mr. Cross. Yes, Sir ; but on the other hand, a portion of our denomination carried the imposition of hands to such an extent, that even all members admitted to the church had the rite extended to them, and could not receive the Lord's Supper until they had been immersed, and had the laying on of hands on their heads.

Mr. Jugg. And the Arminian Baptists went to the extent of declaring that imposition of hands was the *duty* of all baptized believers, and necessary to a right constituted church.

My Father. So that Presbyterians not only differed from Independents, and Independents

from Baptists, but the Baptists were split again into two or three subdivisions.

Mr. Cross. Certainly, Sir; and that, Mr. Rawston, is the life of dissenterism. The very soul of dissenterism is religious divisions. We all think as we like, and we all act as we think. No one has the right to dictate to us. As the Holy Spirit gives us to see the Scriptures, so we believe them and interpret them. One sees with this eye, and the other with that; and our poor Wesleyan brethren are purblind and cannot see at all. But the life of all is difference of opinion.

My Father. But though you see differently, Mr. Cross, to Mr. Hawthorne, and Mr. Hawthorne sees differently to Mr. M'Kenzie, you do not mean to say that the Holy Spirit causes each one to think differently, and to have different views as to the Holy Scriptures, and what they contain; since at that rate there would be no standard of truth."

I was so pleased with my father when he said this, that I could scarcely refrain from clapping my hands; but Dr. Bold made the following reply.

Dr. Bold. The right of private judgment in matters of religion, Sir, is not, I hope, a question for agitation in *your* house. I have set

that to rest in some of my various essays, which no doubt you have read.

Mr. M'Kenzie. The *English* Presbyterians gradually adopted the form of ordination of the Independents and Baptists; that is, they laid aside the *primitive* custom of having several candidates ordained together at a distance from their respective charges, which was and is still the form of the Church of England, and had each minister ordained to his charge in the face of his own (to be) congregation.

My Father. But still the *primitive* churches among dissenters adhered to the Church of England system.

Dr. Bold. Yes, yes, Mr. Rawston, we know that; but if I understood you right, we were asked to give some information as to the *dissenting* modes of ordination, and *not* of the Church of England method, which was the same in the dark ages as it is now; always the same, like Westminster Abbey or St. Paul's Cathedral.

Mr. Twigg. In the seventeenth century the Independents very frequently ordained their ministers themselves, without any other minister being present; but they laid aside this in the beginning of the eighteenth century.

My Father. It seems perfectly inexplicable

how such a system could ever have been adopted; for what could be more incongruous than for persons who were to be taught, to give a charge to him who was to teach them?

Dr. Bold. Incongruous, indeed, Sir; but then, you know, all those differences of opinion are inseparable from that *voluntary principle* which is the basis of all Independent churches.

My Father. But who gave them, *i. e.* the laymen of those times, the *right* of ordaining their own pastors?

Dr. Bold. Stop, Mr. Rawston! we must not be *too* particular about these questions of "*right*;" for if you come to that, who gave the "*right*" to the lay members of the Independent churches to send to the ministers of the neighbouring congregations to ask them to ordain, or set apart their intended ministers? And then how did these neighbouring ministers possess the "*RIGHT*" of so ordaining them? These are dangerous questions to touch upon.

My Father. And yet, Dr. Bold, it is surely well that we should all of us, both fathers and children, understand *why* we approve of this mode in preference to another.

Dr. Bold. Undoubtedly, Mr. Rawston, and yet there are some things we must take for

granted ; and since the time of Dr. Doddridge, the form in the Independent churches has not been materially altered.

Mr. Cross. That cannot be said of our Baptist churches ; and the Presbyterians have made some changes.

Mr. Twigg. The Wesleyans and the followers of George Whitfield retain their old Episcopal tendencies, and especially the Wesleyans.

Mr. Jugg. And are never ordained in the presence of the congregation over which they are to be placed.

Mr. Snibb. But adhere as closely as possible to the Episcopal form.

Dr. Bold. Oh, the Wesleyans, we have nothing to do with them. Samuel Bradburn settled that question, that the Methodists are *not* dissenters. “The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans,” Mr. Rawston.

The conversation had proceeded thus far, when a student from Oxford, the son of an old friend of our family, whom my father had invited, as an act of politeness, to be present at a dissenting supper, “asked leave of the worthy host to put a question or two to the *Divines* present.” As *Henry Aubrey*, for such was his name, had hitherto remained nearly

silent, his presence had not attracted any attention, and the pipes of the Congregational ministers were all subjected to a sort of nervous movement, a kind of sudden jump, when the silent young man began his interrogations.

Henry Aubrey. And pray, Sir, addressing himself to Dr. Bold, will you have the kindness to instruct me, a novice in these matters, as to the objections which you have to the Church of England form of ordination, which has, indeed, the demerit in your eyes of being always the same, but which, at least, has the recommendation of antiquity?"

The ministers all looked as if a traitor had crept into the camp; but Dr. Bold, though an out-and-out dissenter, was a very good-tempered man, and *condescended* to reply to this stripling, who had ventured, with no other armour to defend him than the word of God, to sally forth to meet these *dissenting Goliaths*.

Dr. Bold. We do not object to the Church of England mode and rite of ordination, simply on account of its antiquity, Sir, since the Bible is older than either; but because it is not in harmony with the word of God, which is our *only* rule of faith, that is connected with our own *right* of individual interpretation.

Henry Aubrey. The *right* of individually in-

interpreting the word of God, Doctor, seems to me a very questionable proposition indeed. We have the right to read, receive, and believe it—but we have nowhere given us the right to *interpret* it according to our *private judgments*; for at this rate, Popery, Independency, Episcopacy, and Socinianism, would all stand on the same footing; but we must leave this question aside, for the present, for it would carry us too far, and simply look at the subject of Episcopal ordination.

Dr. Bold. Confine the question as much as you will, Sir, I will only, *en passant*, claim the right for myself of individual interpretation and private judgment, not only on the whole bearing and scope of revelation, but likewise as to every passage of holy writ.

Henry Aubrey. I am afraid, then, Doctor, we shall not get on far with our argument on *Episcopal ordination*, but at least I will humbly enter my *protest* against the censure you have passed on it. You have proved to me, by your interesting and instructive conversation on dissenting ordinations this evening, that, at any rate, you have not amongst your varied sects any established forms, nor any original and divine mode to which you appeal. Now, I take it, you will admit that the apostles them-

selves were appointed and ordained by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Dr. Bold. Yes, certainly.

Henry Aubrey. And that the only outward act recorded as accompanying their reception of the heavenly commission was, *that he breathed* on them; or, in other words, that the Holy Spirit was communicated to them in a direct and positive manner.

Dr. Bold. Yes, Sir; but remember that Christ did not give them any written or recorded directions as to the appointment of their successors.

Henry Aubrey. I am aware of that, Doctor; but he promised them that the Holy Spirit should guide them unto all truth; and during forty days after his resurrection, he conversed with them from time to time, speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And if our Saviour gave no written or recorded directions in favour of the Episcopal form of ordination, that argument cuts both ways, for neither did he leave any which support the dissenting forms.

Dr. Bold. I admit this; nor do we claim any. But how do you support your Church of England rites and forms from apostolical usages?

Henry Aubrey. The apostles having received that guidance from the Holy Spirit which our Saviour had promised them, did not leave their successors as the Lord had done, but proceeded to give precise and specific instructions. In the sixth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, it is recorded that the apostles said to the lay members of the church, "*Look ye out men that we may appoint.*" The lay members did so; but what happened then? The apostles prayed, and *then laid their hands on them.*

Dr. Bold. Very true; but does not this sanction our custom of selecting our pastors for our own churches, and having them specifically set apart for each separate congregation?

Henry Aubrey. By no means, Doctor; for this selection by the lay members was *not* a selection of person, *i. e.* of such a candidate for ordination for a particular church, but only a selection of *character, i. e.* that such and such an individual was, in the opinion of these lay Christians, a suitable person to be a candidate for the office of minister or teacher. And the best proof that such was the nature of the selection is, that Philip, who was commended for ordination by the lay members of the church of Jerusalem, proceeded at once, when he had

been ordained, to preach the gospel, not to them, but to the people of Samaria.

Dr. Bold. But in the early history of the church, at least an appeal was made to the lay members; and, as our church members now select a pastor over a specific congregation, so they selected, if not for a specific congregation, yet for general preaching and teaching.

Henry Aubrey. No, Doctor, they merely did then, what our colleges and seats of learning, in which an authorized clergy is educated, do now; they presented certain candidates for the office of the ministry generally, to the bishops of the church, who examined them, and after being satisfied of their piety, laid hands on them, and set them apart as deacons.

Dr. Bold. But there is this difference, Sir, that in the primitive churches all the candidates were known to be Christians, and were well reported of, as such, to the churches, whereas most of your parish country clergy are a set of fox-hunting, wine-drinking parsons, who have only gone into the Church because they had nothing else to do to get their living—they are parsons, Sir, for “the loaves and fishes.”

Henry Aubrey. I have always been taught, Doctor, that abuse was not argument, and that

when Jove was angry, he thundered. It is not necessary for *me*, or for *my* argument, to institute a comparison between the dissenting ministers of this day, and the apostles or their immediate successors, though I think that the Nonconformists might not gain by the comparison; but when you include the mass of our clergy in your sweeping denunciation against them, I hope you will forgive me if I say you do not know them. The *abuse* is not the *use* of a thing; and the fact that some wolves in sheep's clothing have got into our fold, does not surely establish the fact that all are wolves.

Dr. Bold. Nor do I say it does, Sir, but the existence of these wolves amongst them shows, that at least the clergy are not successors of the apostles.

Henry Aubrey. Pardon me, Doctor, there were twelve apostles and one Judas; but does it follow that there were not eleven who had the right to this title, and to all its honours and privileges?

Dr. Bold. Well, go on, Sir, with your ordination subject, and let us keep to the question at issue.

Henry Aubrey. Be it so, Doctor. Well then, I observe that in the cases of Saint Timothy, Saint Titus, and of the elders ordained in

every church, the mode of ordination was the same. There was first the lay indication or selection ; second, prayer ; and third, the laying on of hands by the apostles, by way of episcopal or apostolical ordination. Saint Timothy was selected in compliance with certain prophecies respecting him, and his is, therefore, an isolated case ; not so with Titus or with the elders generally. In every case, those who were selected received the authoritative appointment by the laying on of the hands of some who had already been appointed to the same office themselves. Thus the former dissenting system of the people ordaining their own pastors, is proved to be unscriptural ; nor less so the ancient Baptist heresy, of private members being subjected to the laying on of hands by their brother lay members. Nor was this mode of ordination partial or confined, for St. Paul says to Titus, “ For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.”

Dr. Bold. The Church of England lays much stress on the right of ordination, because that Church is an exclusive and excluding one, and encourages the people in a belief in priest-craft. The clergy of that Church —

Henry Aubrey. Pardon me, Doctor, if I finish your sentence—are the most tolerant clergy in the whole world ; and if the office of the priesthood was not to be respected and loved, why should it be written in the Epistle to the Thessalonians, “ We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, AND ARE OVER YOU IN THE LORD ” (not equals, Doctor, but superiors), “ and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake ? ”

Mr. Mountain. Yes, for their good works’ sake, but not for their fox-hunting talents, not for their trout-fishing zeal.

Mr. Snibb. No ; nor for their opposition to the people of God.

Mr. Twigg. Nor for their office of clerical magistrates.

Henry Aubrey. Not quite so quick, gentlemen. The Scripture says, *for their work’s sake*, that is, that they, being regularly ordained ministers of the word of life and salvation, are, for the sake of that work to which they have been set apart, to be respected and esteemed by those whom they are ordained to teach and instruct.

Dr. Bold. Well, let us go on. What have

you to say to your APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION claim, Sir? I suppose you abandon that?

Henry Aubrey. No, Doctor, I do not. I abandon, or rather reject, the dissenting *version* of apostolical succession; but all of us, whether Episcopalians, Baptists, Presbyterians, or Independents, believe, in a certain degree and to a certain extent, in the *principle*. Let us see. Do you believe that you, Doctor, have NO RIGHT to be what you call a minister of the gospel?

Dr. Bold. Indeed I do not. On the contrary, I believe I have a *right*.

Henry Aubrey. But who gave you that right?

Dr. Bold. The Holy Spirit of God.

Henry Aubrey. Our clergy say the same. But then how is the possession of this right, as conferred on you by the Holy Spirit of God, to be evinced or proved?

Dr. Bold. By my profession of faith, by my life and conduct, and by the opinions and laying on of hands of the ministers of the church who have been pre-ordained.

Henry Aubrey. But by whom pre-ordained?

Dr. Bold. By other ministers.

Henry Aubrey. But who were those other ministers?

Dr. Bold. Descendants of former Noncon-

formists, the Calamys and Howes, the Baxters and the Bates's, of former days.

Henry Aubrey. But the founders of Nonconformity had all of them, or nearly all, received *Episcopal* ordination, and afterwards dissented. Take now, therefore, the case of Mr. Brown, the founder of the sect of the Brownists, now called Independents; what right had *he* to ordain?

Dr. Bold. We maintain, Sir, that although the Independents, as a sect, only began their existence as a body at a certain period in the history of the church of Christ, yet that their *origin* was in the time of the apostles, and that the apostles and primitive teachers believed in the *principle* of Independency.

Henry Aubrey. So that you, Doctor, claim your *succession* from the apostles, if not in a *direct* line, as our Church can *prove* to be the case with her clergy: yet in an *indirect* line, you claiming, as we do, to have not only a scriptural, but an apostolical origin. The Wesleyans and the Calvinistic Methodists, as well as the Presbyterians, make the same claim; and the real question at issue is, "which makes the claim truly and scripturally?"

Dr. Bold. I have no objection, Sir, to this mode of stating the question if you will; and

now let us hear what you have to say on behalf of the *exclusive* claims of your Church.

Henry Aubrey. In all ages of Christianity since the days of the apostles, I believe we shall all admit there have been officiating spiritual teachers.

Mr. Jugg. Oh ! certainly.

Henry Aubrey. There have been bishops, deacons, and priests, as there were originally in the first churches.

Mr. Snibb. No one can deny this !

Henry Aubrey. Well, then, we say that these bishops, deacons, and priests have been, and are now, what they originally were in the first ages of the church ; with this admission, that as among twelve apostles there was one Judas, so here and there in the Church, we find false, that is, unconverted and unspiritual members. But as the case of Mr. —, one of the Independent preachers, who was tried and convicted of —, is no argument against all the Independent preachers ; neither is the want of spiritual gifts in this or that clergyman any evidence against the whole body of clergy.

Mr. M'Kenzie. Certainly not.

Henry Aubrey. I proceed, then, a step further ; and I say, that history does not record any change as having taken place in the

mode of ordination ; and if it does record that change, I respectfully challenge you to produce an account of the transaction. The silence of both civil and ecclesiastical history on such a point as this, is proof that no change took place. That which we claim for ourselves, we admit for you. Since the time of Dr. Doddridge, the mode of ordaining in Independent congregations has not materially changed ; and if the existence of Christianity had to be dated from that epoch, and the plan of ordination then followed was to be proved by history to be the same as that now followed by you, we should be bound to admit that you adopted the apostolical mode, and that you were successors of the apostles. But this is *not* the case ; at least for sixteen hundred and fifty years after the death of our Saviour, you, the Brownists or Independents, did *not* exist ; and yet during the whole of that time a regular, stated, uninterrupted line of clergy was kept up.

Mr. Cross. Not uninterrupted, Sir, since heresies got into the church, and cabals and false doctrines existed, and were propagated.

Henry Aubrey. I admit this, Sir, but that does not prove that the succession was not continued. I suppose you will not deny that,

since the time of Brown, the founder of the Independents in England, many heresies have crept into your Independent or congregational churches, and many a wolf in sheep's clothing has entered *your* churches; but yet you maintain that there has been a regular succession of congregational churches, though the Arian, Socinian, and other heresies have sprung out of your voluntary system.

Dr. Bold. Yes, we admit that. There has been a regular succession or keeping up of congregational churches; but not an apostolical succession of the ministers.

Henry Aubrey. Then by what authority do you preach?

Dr. Bold. By the authority of the Founder of our religion, and the word of God, both of which commanded us to preach the gospel to every creature.

Henry Aubrey. But Christ did not tell *you*, and the command was not given to *you*, except you adopt the principle of succession. You claim, as descendants of (spiritually) or as successors of the apostles, to have the right, subject to certain preliminary forms and ceremonies, profession of faith, and laying on of hands, to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world that lieth in wickedness; do you not?

Mr. Jugg. To be sure we do; we have a divine mission.

Henry Aubrey. As the apostles had.

Mr. Snibb. Yes; but without the power of working miracles.

Henry Aubrey. Well, gentlemen, then *you* claim, as well as we do, if we deprive the question of all verbiage, and terms made to confuse, instead of to explain—you claim an apostolical succession for yourselves and your brother ministers.

For, first, You claim to be ministers. Second, You exercise the work of the ministry, even administering the sacraments founded by our Saviour. Third, You set apart each other by a religious service, that you call an ordination service, to this work of the ministry. Fourth, You insist that the mode adopted by the Independents, for example, of separating a minister, examining him, and ordaining him, is the primitive mode. And, fifth, That you are therefore successors of the apostles and of the early disciples.

Mr. Mountain. Yes, but then we do not pretend that the rite of ordination has been handed down regularly in our body from bishop to bishop in every age, from the time of the apostles downwards.

Henry Aubrey. No ; because your denomination did not exist till between 1600 and 1700 years after Christ died ; but yet you maintain that you now, as preachers of the gospel, preach and teach what the apostles did, and that you are representatives of that truth which was then proclaimed.

Mr. Snibb. To be sure we do.

Dr. Bold. Take care—take care—brother Snibb, what you admit ; or the young man will make you say more than you intend to do.

Mr. Snibb. Not at all, Doctor ; I mean to say, and to maintain, that though I am not descended from the apostles in a direct and fleshly line, as I am descended from my great grandfather, yet that spiritually I am descended from the apostles, and that I have, as a minister of the gospel, received by the imposition of hands, as the means made use of by the great Head of the church of Christ, that spiritual succession which it is essential for me to possess as a preacher and teacher of the word of God.

Henry Aubrey. Well then, let me proceed. As it was in the primitive churches, so it is in the Church of England. The lay members of the Church, where the candidate has been in the habit of attending divine worship, are publicly appealed to *three times*, to state if any of them

know any reason why he should not be admitted to the sacred office, and if they do, they are invited to declare it. And before the bishop ordains him, another appeal is made to all assembled. And as it was in the primitive churches, so it is now, several were set apart at the same time; and finally, so set apart by the bishop; which bishop was set apart by another bishop, and so on, and so on, back, and back, and back; till we come to the period of the apostles. No man is received or recognised as a clergyman of the Church of England, who has not been presented to a bishop, and solemnly set apart to the office by prayer and the laying on of hands of the bishop and assisting presbyters. All this is done in order, and with decency, calmly and deliberately, and after a careful examination into the literary, theological, and spiritual state and attainments of each candidate.

Dr. Bold. Well, Sir, you have defended your system and your Church with great zeal and talent, but you must allow me to retain my opinions, whilst I would not deprive you of yours.

Mr. Jugg. Oh yes, think and let think—Eh, Doctor?

Mr. Snibb. That's the best of our *voluntary* principle, we are not bound down by prece-

dents, or decrees of councils, or acts of parliament, but all have the *inalienable* right of *private* judgment in *all* matters relating to religion.

Mr. Twigg. Yes, liberty of conscience, and liberty of opinions, these are the blessings of the Reformation.

Henry Aubrey. Rather, gentlemen, the CERTAINTY OF GOD'S WORD, AND NO APPEAL FROM ITS DECISIONS. This was the great doctrine of the Reformation.

My Father. Come, gentlemen, let's say THE LADIES; so the port, sherry, or spirits and water were appealed to, and the toast and glasses finished the controversy.

I never forgot this conversation. I began to perceive that there were at least two sides to this dissenting controversy against the Church, and I resolved, when I should have opportunities, on understanding why I *was not* a Churchman, as well as why I *was* a dissenter.

Before I terminate this portion of my early history, and the annals of my family, it is necessary to return to the George Palmer party, to my mother, maternal grand-parents, and aunt Mary.

The *George Palmer party* got less and less moral, and more and more violent. Their leader

became a great drinker, and would frequently stagger up the pulpit stairs, and rave against the "Hell-born Church of England, the mother of harlots," the "blind leaders of the blind" at "the old Presbyterian chapel," and, finally, against "Cross and the Dippers," and "old Sawney M'Kenzie, and the cold-blooded Presbyterians."

This is a specimen at once of his piety and his talents. Vulgar, coarse, and insolent, he was a pest to society, and a Judas to religion. Yet, alas! how many such there are even in 1841 in the Antinomian dissenting pulpits in England. I do *not* mean in the Independent, or Presbyterian, or Baptist, but in the *Antinomian* pulpits. The language of which they make use is as illiterate, indecent, and offensive, when speaking either of the persons, pulpits, doctrines, or supporters of those who differ from them, as would be that of a notorious blasphemer at any of the haunts of vice and profligacy. More intolerant than even the Romish Church, these usurpers of the title of preachers of the gospel, bring the cause of evangelical truth into disgrace, and occasion the precious name of the Saviour of mankind to be vilified by the worldly and profane.

George Palmer, by his depraved system of

late hours, and of a constant excess of drinking, not only beer and wine, but ardent spirits, injured his health, destroyed his constitution, and brought himself at 44 years of age to the end I am about to describe. In the month of January, on a Sunday night, after having uttered one of his most violent harangues on the doctrine of "*reprobation*" to a small but vehement and immoral assembly, and after having invoked the maledictions of heaven on the "dumb dogs" who had dared that day to preach of repentance and holiness, and thus to exclude the people of God from their "LIBERTY," this bold blasphemer retired with some of the most hardy of his party to spend the evening in exciting speeches against the Church and the *Arminians*, for all were Arminians who did not agree with him in his opinions. According to custom, George Palmer drank copiously of all that was placed before him, and when he left the house at twelve o'clock he was observed to stagger. The night was dark. The cold was severe. He had to walk about a mile to his home. As he proceeded along a deserted street to a byelane he fell over a short wooden post, a parish boundary, and was precipitated into a ditch, falling on his head. Stunned by the fall, and

wholly unable, from his deplorable state of intoxication, to raise himself from his position, he lay there, first senseless, and then bleeding and groaning for some hours; and was only discovered towards day-break by the men of a neighbouring farmer proceeding with a team and wain to some distance to procure manure. "*The drunken parson*," as they styled him, with vile oaths and low jests, they raised on their shoulders, and thus carried home, not to his wife, for she had died of a broken heart, but to a woman who acted as his housekeeper, and to whom he entrusted the bringing up of his younger children. His shop had gone to ruin; his business had fallen off so much, that his furniture had been taken for rent; and the Palmerites, ashamed of their leader, were gradually becoming Socinians or Deists. Extremes never meet so closely as in matters of religion; Socinians become Papists, and Antinomians, Socinians.

George Palmer, when he arrived at home, was not dead, nor scarcely in a dangerous state, though his head had received a violent contusion and cut; but the bleeding from the wound had been rather more beneficial than otherwise. Shame, annoyance, confusion, came upon him, and he insisted on being supplied

with brandy. He drank largely. The woman who looked after his children was indifferent to his fate. His pulse quickened, fever came on, he raved like a maniac, he cursed his fate and his family, he refused to listen to the advice of medical attendants, he dashed from him all medicine, and then sunk into a state of exhausted delirium. Remedies were administered, and attempts were made to reduce his fever. Some hours of physical calmness ensued; but his mind then became frightfully disturbed, and he who had preached and taught for worldly pelf, advantage, and fame, a false gospel and a false Saviour to his fellow blasphemers, was now, even in this world, made to feel that there is a place of torment as well as one of happiness, and that, "as the tree falls, so it must lie." Between the delirium of disease, the madness of his mind, and the burning fever of his heart, he remained twice twenty-four hours. At last the period approached when that separation was to take place, which was to give his emaciated, diseased, and wretched body to corruption, and when his soul, unclothed, was to appear before its God. "I am lost, I am lost," cried the false teacher of false doctrines. "Call my children. Let them learn from my end what it is to die a hypocrite, and a blas-

phemer." His children were called for. The sight of them was too much for his sunken frame. "The pains of hell," he said with a faint and half-choked voice. "I go ——," and in his throat were heard the signals of approaching dissolution. With this traitor to his Saviour expired his name and his sect; though his followers afterwards collected in another form, and propagated the same doctrines, but with more external decency, and with another name.

The Antinomian heresy is gaining ground in the dissenting chapels. Taught to believe that every one has the right to interpret the Scriptures for himself, and to exercise what is styled the right of private judgment in matters of religion, smatterers in theology are to be found on all our highways, and false teachers of a falsified gospel in all our streets. These self-taught teachers of errors the most dangerous and polluting, set themselves up as the censors of the Church, the enemies of the clergy, and the critics of Episcopacy. Unawed by the apostolical and hereditary claims to respect and love of an authorized and gospel clergy, they erect in many of the towns and cities of the land, tenements in which error is propagated, and the real gospel is degraded.

These worse than charlatans, these blasphemers, dare to declare, not only that the clergy of the Church of England, but even that their own dissenting friends, of more respectable and religious character and life, "do not preach the gospel," and impose on their deluded, blind, and dissolute followers, a false system of belief and practice. Alas! that the more virtuous and religious portion of dissenters should encourage, by their continued and vehement separation from the Church, these traitors to that gospel from which we can all alone expect salvation and heaven.

Of my mother it is necessary I should here speak. Although she was a Baptist first by education and early habits, and then by what she called conviction, yet she had a kindly feeling towards those who differed from her, and avowed great respect for the *pious* and devoted portion of the clergy of the Church of England. Disgusted with the wranglings in the Baptist congregations; alarmed by the then progress, in varied forms, of Antinomian error; impressed by the facts that Mr. Rawston, sen., and Mr. Chapman had both admitted in their last hours, that *THEIR dissenterism* had been injurious to their spiritual progress; and above all, satisfied that dissent contained within itself

not the elements of stability, but of ceaseless changes and multiplied separation, she grew increasingly averse to all measures of hostility against the Church of England, and simply desired to live in peace with man, and die with confidence in God. She, who had been some years previously a *zealous* Baptist, had been so shocked by the unhallowed death of her brother, the strict communionist, that she at last declared, "for her part, she could hold out the right-hand of fellowship to the Rev. Mr. Montague, the rector of the parish, and receive from him the sacrament of the Lord's Supper." And here I may mention a fact, which had likewise made a deep impression on her mind, and led her to review some of the "*positivism*" of her prior life.

A young woman, an attendant at the Independent meeting-house, of which Mr. Hawthorne was minister, had, soon after his appointment to the post of pastor, been taken ill. It would seem that during several months she had been the subject of religious impressions, but that she had been deterred from becoming a member of the Independent church, from a very natural fear of explaining either to the deacon or before the members, her religious experience and spiritual state. To her mistress, who was

a member, and a rigid Independent, she spoke of her views and feelings, and the latter endeavoured to prevail on her to receive the visits of the deacon and minister, and to make a confession of faith and religious experience to the church. But, much as she desired to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, she could not get over her feeling of Christian modesty, and remained, therefore, without the enjoyment of this communicating act of the love of God *to* her, and of the death of Christ *for* her. At last she was taken ill. Mr. Hawthorne was sent for. He conversed with, and prayed for her. She expressed an earnest wish to receive the sacrament. He stated, that, "as she was not a member, he could not administer to her the elements of an ordinance established only for the members of the church." She wept bitterly. He promised to consult the deacon. The deacon proposed to convene a meeting of the church to admit her as a member. The poor girl was much distressed by the delay: she begged her mistress to send for the clergyman of the parish; "for," she said, "I am sure Mr. Montague will do for me as he did for a friend of mine, who, when she was converted in even her long last illness, on being satisfied as to her state of mind, gave her the sacra-

ment." The mistress assured the poor girl that a church-meeting had been called, and that she would be admitted as a member, and then would be entitled to communicate. The meeting was called. The deacon made his report, and Mr. Hawthorne urged her instant admission; but a discussion was raised by some of the female members, and just as it was about to be put to the vote, the mistress of the poor girl entered the vestry-room, and said, "It is too late, Mr. Hawthorne—poor Susan is dead!" In answer to some questions put to her, she added, "Yes, Sir, as long as she was sensible she expressed an earnest desire to receive the sacrament, and even wept that she could not do so. I was often *tempted* to send for the clergyman, but *I could not bear the idea of her dying a Churchwoman!*" This incident was never forgotten by my mother, and produced a considerable effect on her future life.

My maternal grand-parents were zealous Baptists. The Church of England was their abhorrence. "Any religion but the State religion." I do think they had a greater respect for Popery, than they had for Episcopacy. If the creed of their own sect had been that of the Established Church, I feel assured they would have given up their profession of Bap-

tists. They neither could nor would discriminate between a religion contrived by the State, erected by the State, the work of the State—and a religion which had been adopted by the State, to secure to it a moral action, Christian energy, and true liberty. If they were told at any time, that, but for the connection of the Church with the State, the State would be Atheist, or Deist, or Infidel—they replied, “No matter what the State is, so that the *people* are not.” If they were reminded that the State exercised a great and necessary influence, as well over the minds and hearts, as the bodies of the people, they replied, “The *State* is only an imaginary thing, it has no real existence, and can exercise no influence at all if the people are well instructed.” If they were assured that “the State made the laws, created magistrates, directed the administration of justice, and even in constitutional monarchies exercised an immense influence over all that was intellectual, moral, and religious in a country, and that the connection of a religion with the State was a necessity in a Christian land,” they had no other reply than this: “The clergy, for their own profit, have connected the Church with the State, that they may enjoy the loaves and the fishes.” It was

of no use to prove to them, that the Church of England was a poor church, a liberal church, a Catholic church, and an Evangelical church;—no, it was connected with the *State*, and as Jesus Christ and his apostles were not a king and magistrates, *therefore* they would not believe that any *State* religion could be good for any thing. In this creed they lived, and in this they died; but as they were misinformed and not ungodly people, I believe, and rejoice to believe, they at last went to heaven. There they will learn with astonishment, but not with regret, that many of those whom they looked upon, whilst here, as unworthy teachers and preachers of that gospel they loved in their hearts, were devoted servants of Him whom they preached, and faithful ministers of the word of God.

My aunt Mary was my pet, my darling, my dear friend, my sweet counsellor, a sort of guardian angel to my young steps; and had no other fault (I speak humanly) than her dissenterism. And even this was so different a dissenterism to any other I had ever seen, that I could almost love, though I could hardly confide in it. For she was so charitable to the poor, so fond of all good men, so careful and devout a reader of her Bible, so great a lover

of our dear collects, homilies, and litany, so true a friend to all poor children, so full of peace, and love, and charity to all men, that if a sect had been established with no other appellation than "CHRISTIANS," she would have been entitled to the first place on the lists of its members. And yet she was so humble, so modest, so diffident, so full of prayer and contrition, repentance and lowly-mindedness, that nothing really offended her so much as to call her "good." Dear aunt Mary! it was almost a pleasure to be naughty to be scolded by her, she did it so sweetly; and as to being ill, it was quite a pleasure to be in bed and be nursed by her. Such tenderness, such devotedness, such sympathy! The day I lost my aunt Mary was the saddest in my then past life. I thought I could never be happy more, and that it would be a sin ever to smile again. The *future* appeared to me one dark blot, with nothing to lighten, nothing to cheer it. I remember that it was on a Saturday morning in the pretty month of May, when all the trees were in blossom, the sun shining warmly, and the birds singing their wildest and sweetest carols: it seemed to my youthful mind quite awful to die in such weather, and in such a month as that. Dear aunt Mary died "of an

internal disorder" which nothing could cure: nothing even relieve. "My dear George," she said, placing my hands between hers, "*to-morrow*—I shall spend with God and my Saviour in heaven." She looked as if her soul were with them by anticipation; and as though her eternal Sabbath had commenced. "I die in peace with all mankind, and I do not ask you, my dear boy, to belong to any particular sect or denomination, but to love your Saviour, and seek His blessing!" I thought my heart would have burst, when she asked me, "if I loved her?" "Oh, dear aunt Mary," I said; "sweet aunt Mary, I shall *never* love any one but you." My heart was overcome; and so was her's; but she died as calmly as the wave that breaks silently on the shore of a southern lake. Every one loved aunt Mary. She was the first to give, and the last to repine; the first to make others happy, and the last to think of her own felicity. I never entirely got over the loss of my aunt Mary—but her sweet, calm, Christian death set me thinking; and as I knew from her own blessed lips, "that she loved the Church of England, though she had been by education and habits led to be a dissenter," I resolved on examining for myself, not only the religion in which I was being instructed, but,

above and before all, that religion of the gospel which had been exemplified in her life, and recommended to me by her bright example. Adieu! dear, dear aunt Mary! We shall, I hope, meet in that world, and around that throne, where those who love not the Church of England here, shall there witness the eternal blessedness of her first founders, her venerable martyrs, and a long succession of pious, devoted, and heaven-born adherents.

PART II.

LIFE AND TIMES OF A MODERN DISSENTER.

THE prejudices of education, or, to speak more strictly, the prejudices resulting from education, are generally respectable, not to say praiseworthy. Of course there are exceptions to this, as to all other rules; but, generally speaking, the prejudices resulting from education demonstrate a respect for superiors, a belief in authority, a feeling of confidence in the wisdom of past generations, humility of mind, and an aversion to change and agitation. When, therefore, I have seen a quiet, calm, respectable, and pious dissenter, averse to all strife, rendering homage to the learning and piety of the clergy of a church of which he was, nevertheless, not a member; attentive to his religious duties, views of truth, and traditional opinions; when I have even seen such a man zealous for his meeting-house and its system, yet without being able to give in any very

clear or argumentative manner, the reasons for his prejudices against the Church, and in favour of his own profession, throwing himself on the experience of the departed, and on the education he had received from them, I have respected his prejudices, though I have not been able to approve them. It is not because men are dissenters that they are to be opposed; but because they have become noisy, declamatory, violent, intolerant, bitter, and persecuting. The dissenters were once most happy to support a national religion and a national church, provided they were allowed to worship God in their private rooms or meeting-houses, without let or hindrance. But now, though they are in possession of unlimited toleration, may open any place of meeting for half-a-crown, and may preach and teach wherever they think fit, without even any previous examination, test, oath, or declaration, thereby enjoying *far greater privileges and exemptions* than those possessed by the established clergy of the realm, they are not satisfied with their faith, their altars, their meeting-houses, their freedom from tolls, the exemption of their chapels from poor-rates, and all the various other concessions made to them of late years; but instead of remaining faithful to the prejudices of their

education, and to the principles of their ancestors, rendering tithes to whom tithes are due, and church-rates to whom church-rates, they have become political partisans, instead of religious professors, and enemies to an established religion, instead simply of separatists from it. There was a time, even in the less ancient history of dissent, when its more modern leaders, I mean such men as David Bogue, John Townsend, Edward Parsons, James Roby, George Burder, and Robert Hall, all belonging, except the last, to the Independent denomination, never proposed to do more than ask for dissenters the toleration and the exemptions they now enjoy. And as to the Wesleyan Methodists, one of their most able and eloquent writers (Mr. Richard Watson) has recorded, of that denomination,

“The prevalent sentiment of the Methodists, as a body, towards the Establishment, has been that of friendship. We rejoice that she has great influence with the mass of the population. We wish her prosperity and perpetuity, as we wish all other Christian churches; and the *more so* as we recognise in her ‘the mother of us all,’ and can never contemplate, without the deepest admiration, her noble army of confessors and martyrs, and the illustrious train of

her divines, whose writings have been, and still continue to be, the light of Christendom."

The conduct of the dissenters in 1841 requires, therefore, explanation. It is *not* the result of honest and conscientious educational prejudices. It is no longer entitled to the respect of those who yet differ from them. It is neither spiritual in its character, nor Christian in its objects. To attempt to destroy a national religion, without the most remote prospect or even intention of establishing a fixed and general religion in its stead, is an act not of toleration and liberty, but of vandalism or insanity. For as sure as that truth is truth, should the religion of the Church of England, as a State religion, be destroyed, Atheism would be proclaimed in our streets, Deism would insult our Scriptures, and Infidelity would erect pagan temples to some unknown and unrevealed God. For, I believe in my conscience, that such is the state of unrestrained liberty of private judgment, to which the dissenters of the last thirty years have brought the mass of the young men of the middling classes in England, and so upstart have the minds of these persons become, self-confident and self-satisfied as they are, and yet at the same time so uncertain as to what is

truth, from the host of false teachers and false doctrines always ready to their hand to believe in or reject at pleasure ; that if a new sect should arise in England of a bold and striking, though of a pagan character, there are multitudes to be found in these morally unsettled and disorganized classes, who would bow down the knee to some fabled deity. I propose, then, in this Second Part of "My Life," to present to the public a faithful record of my own "*Life and Times*," that some of the multitudinous errors and enormous evils of modern dissent may become better known, and that the events and circumstances which have led to this state of things may be better appreciated, as well as more truly felt.

When in 1814 and 1815 "THE VELVET CUSHION," of the Rev. Mr. Cunningham, vicar of Harrow, and "A NEW COVERING TO THE VELVET CUSHION," of Dr. John Styles, the Independent minister, made their appearance, dissenterism had begun to give signs of future aggression. But they were feeble, few, and far between. Though John Styles (still living) was then one of the ablest and most zealous writers of the Independent party, and one most competent to reply to the vicar of Harrow, yet such was twenty-five years ago the feeling

among the leaders of dissenters, that their own congregations were not prepared for any disrespectful language towards the Church, and therefore it was that in "*The New Covering to the Velvet Cushion*," its dissenting author, after having eloquently extolled the virtues and merits, influence and character of a pious clergyman of the Church of England, declared, "that as far as he was acquainted with the *Orthodox Dissenters*, he was persuaded that nothing would afford them greater satisfaction, than to know that every pulpit in this kingdom was occupied by a clergyman who zealously preached the doctrines of the Thirty-nine Articles to which he subscribes, and who conducted himself in a manner worthy of his profession; and were it possible to present such a scene before their eyes, he knew they would participate in something of the feelings of Moses on the heights of Pisgah, and believe that, indeed, they saw a *goodly land*, and heaven descending to earth."

And again, "He totally disclaimed the imputation of a quarrelsome disposition. Dissenters loved all good men. They said with the apostle, 'Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity;' and while, in the spirit of charity, they were disposed to impute

the best motives even to many of those whom they considered as embracing some of the worst errors, they were equally ready, in the spirit of benevolence, to co-operate with others, who widely differed from them in many opinions, to do good. They were not contentious. They respected the laws, honoured the king, obeyed governments in all civil matters, and lived quiet and peaceable lives."

This was the language of one of the chiefs of the Independent party only twenty-five years ago, and the then organs of that party fully concurred in Dr. Styles's description of the feelings and attitude of the dissenters of Great Britain towards the Church of England, in those days. How then has it come to pass that, in 1841, only a quarter of a century later, the attitude and feelings of the dissenters have wholly changed? How is it, that associations are now formed to impoverish, degrade, and even overthrow the Church? How is it, that respect for the clergy, though that clergy is ten times more evangelical than at the former epoch, is now scarcely felt by the same professing body; that reverence for the Church of England would now be regarded as an offence against dissenting principles; and that the one great object sought for by the leaders of modern separatists, in their own

names, as well as in those of their constituents, is to destroy the national religion, and leave the religious provision for the wants of the country entirely to *voluntary movements* on the part of private individuals? Nor let it be said that these opinions and wishes are confined to a few. This is *not* the case. The dissenters of the three denominations represent the Independent, Presbyterian, and Baptist congregations. The heterodox dissenters represent all the shades of anti-trinitarian heresy, from the Arian to the Socinian, still embracing in their arms Universalists, Southcottians, and even Papists. The Baptist Board is the very essence of the Baptist dissenting schism. The Protestant Society keeps alive the flame in the country congregations against the Church of England; and the United Associate Presbytery, Evangelical Church Voluntary Association, Church-rate Abolition Society, and other kindred institutions, do represent, and are supported by, the various and otherwise discordant sections of multiform dissent. They have the Evangelical, the Congregational, and the Baptist Magazines, as well as the Eclectic Review, the Voluntary, the Patriot, and other minor publications, to support their destructive politics and their subversive and anti-Episcopal

measures ; and all of these are upheld by the noisy, turbulent, agitating, political, unscriptural, uncharitable dissenterism of the days in which we live. How then has all this been effected ? I hope to supply the key to this problem in the remaining portion of “ My Life.”

As by my grandfather's will I was entitled, on my coming of age, to no less a sum than *two thousand pounds*, which in the meantime was placed in the Three per Cents, my father, with my full consent and approbation, resolved on bringing me up to the medical profession, and on articling me to a general practitioner of some eminence in the city of London. It was not from any decided wish on his part to place me with a *dissenter*, that I was articulated to one ; but simply from the circumstance that Mr. Griffiths, for such was his name, was well known to and recommended by a respectable family of our town, who had gone to reside in the metropolis. My early education had been that which the sons of dissenters who are influential and wealthy receive in country towns. I had gone to a good day school ; learnt Cicero in Latin, and Homer in Greek ; was tolerably well acquainted with history, both ancient and modern ; and was not ignorant

of geography, mathematics, or the French language. As to my religious state and opinions they were also like those of most dissenters' sons similarly circumstanced. I had heard constant talk about religion from the time I first lisped the Lord's Prayer, but which was soon exchanged for a prayer made for us by Mr. Chapman. No one, as a youth, could have had better opportunities than myself for becoming acquainted with the *mechanism* of the dissenting system, or for observing what may without any want of charity be styled "dissenting tactics;" and now I was about being sent to a family, where dissenting principles and dissenting controversies were the constant themes of conversation. Mr. Griffiths was acquainted with the chiefs of the Independent, Baptist, Presbyterian, and even Wesleyan bodies; though the latter were hardly ever invited to meet the former. When agitation, opposition, petitioning, or meeting for political or political-religious purposes were the objects of the dinner, tea, or evening parties, the former were selected; but when religious intercourse, and friendly and pious conversation, were felt to be required, as a sort of antidote to the poison of perpetual dissenting agitation, then some Wesleyan ministers and friends

surrounded the, by no means either frugal or humble, board of Mr. Griffiths. I was articled at the age of fifteen to that gentleman, for a period of five years; and my father paid the somewhat liberal premium of five hundred pounds. But then I was no shopboy, no mere compounder of drugs, or pestle and mortar lad, but was in all respects treated as one of the family, mixed in the same society as Mr. and Mrs. Griffiths, enjoying the advantage of their conversation, and, above all, visiting, whenever it was possible for me to do so, not only the hospitals, but the private patients of Mr. Griffiths. And here, in justice to this gentleman, I must record, that on no occasion did he ever act, speak, or, I believe, think, to or of me, in any way but as a father would think or act towards his son; and that from Mr. Griffiths, his wife and family, I ever experienced the greatest kindness. To him I am likewise mainly indebted for a thorough acquaintance with the profession to which I have the honour to belong, aided, as I ever was during my stay with him, by his superior knowledge and happy mode of instruction. As Mr. Griffiths belonged to the aristocracy of the dissenters, I also saw at his house the best society dissenters can produce, and that

not in a country town, or even city, but in the heart of the metropolis. I do not say, indeed, that we lived at the west end of the town; and when do dissenters do this? Compare the number of meeting-houses at the east with those at the west of London (I except the Wesleyan Methodists), as well as the number of attendants, and this fact alone will prove that dissenterism has not yet found its way among the highly educated and influential classes. I am aware that the dissenters of 1841 will reply, "Not many learned, not many mighty are called;" but I will answer, I thank God that the gospel is known to and loved by both the learned and the mighty in our Church, and that such men as Lord Roden, Lord Ashley, the Earl of Chichester, the Earl of Galloway, Lord Bexley, Lord Teignmouth, Lord Calthorpe, Lord Barham, Lord Lorton, and many, many others, are not the less disciples of the meek and holy Jesus because their fortunes are ample, and their Christian generosity keeps pace with them.

Without specifying the precise street or house in which Mr. Griffiths resided, I may say that, strictly speaking, it belonged neither to the east nor west ends of the metropolis, but was central. It was large and commo-

dious, airy, and well situated, and had a garden. It wanted no comfort; and as the reputation of its occupant was well known among dissenters, his income was not only adequate to his expenses, but he accumulated, by degrees, a well-earned and respectable fortune. Mr. Griffiths's medical library was admirable, and was always wholly at my service; but his general library was eminently dissenting in its character; and it was always a matter of surprise to me, until I came to understand more fully thereafter the genius and character of dissent, that a man so liberal in his medical practice, and his domestic and household arrangements, and even so generous to myself, and to another articled pupil, Charles Wyatt, should be so stiff, severe, bigoted, and intolerant in his dissenterism.

As soon as I entered the house of Mr. Griffiths, I found that *family prayer* was regularly attended to, night and morning; but as Mr. Griffiths's practice was large and widely scattered, he could seldom officiate more than once a-day. Mrs. Griffiths, who was even more bigoted than her husband in all her dissenting tastes and predilections, acted as chaplain on all occasions when her husband was not able to preside, and, as she rejected

all forms, even Mr. Jay's prayers, she was monotonous, prolix, without ideas, always appeared to be discoursing to God, and informing him of what he was, rather than confessing her sins, thanking him for his mercy, imploring his forgiveness, or petitioning for a continuance of his love and goodness to us all. This is the *general* character of all dissenting prayers, both family and public. The dissenters of 1841 can boast of some pulpit orators, and of a few scholars and learned men, but they are more defective than ever in their prayers to God, both at public and family worship. Prayer with them is almost always nothing more than the listening to a man who may utter what is true or incorrect, what is scriptural or what is not so; what is suitable to his hearers, or what is just the reverse; what is believed by them, or rejected by them; and what is partly new and unprepared to his own mind, and wholly so to the minds of others. It is no wonder then that I have frequently heard dissenting ministers declare, at the house of Mr. Griffiths, "that they had been that morning, or that night, so lost in prayer, as to be unable, with any comfort, to go on." Useless repetitions, long and verbose declarations to God of what were his attributes, as though

the Holy God required fallen man to inform him of his perfect and inconceivable character; crude and undigested petitions for all sorts of things, known only to a dissenting vocabulary, make up the bulk of the prayers of our modern dissenters. And yet, if they considered the nature of prayer, they would surely feel that whilst preaching is mainly addressed to the understandings of men, prayer, on the contrary, is speaking to God. It is not a sense of impressions from without, whether from the eyes or ears, or both; neither is it the judging and discriminating process of the intellect; but it is the activity of the spirit in man, stirring up his sense of want and anxiety for supply, and hope of success, that he may lay hold upon God in the sacred and chastened vehemence of spiritual effort. But how is this inward effort to be made in a public congregation? Not by the unknown words of one man, who prays at most for himself, his own feelings, and his own sense of want; but by words already known, and also examined and approved. When, as in the case of the Church of England, these words have been previously examined and approved, printed, adopted, and put into general circulation; those who take a part in her apostolical services, dismiss from their minds all

suspicion, all lingering, cooling caution, and throw their whole hearts into the burning sacrifice. But is this the case with those who attend at dissenting congregations, and listen to the extemporaneous prayers of their teachers? Certainly not, they are only listeners, they are *not* worshippers. They hear, indeed, with attention, if you will, the prayers of another; but they do not—they cannot—pray themselves; and it is for this reason that so small a portion of the public worship of dissenters consists of prayer to God. In former times, indeed, the service began with a short prayer, then the reading of the word of God, or the singing a hymn, or *vice versâ*, then a long prayer, partaking, by its sameness, of the character of a form of prayer, and so on; but now, in 1841, a dissenting minister would be highly disapproved of, who should think of exceeding a quarter of an hour in prayer, whilst his sermon may be an hour and a quarter in length, provided it shall be eloquent or controversial. It has been asked, with great force and propriety, “If extemporaneous prayers are the best, why should there not be extemporaneous psalms and hymns?” If printed *prayers* to God are un-apostolical, monotonous, and unspiritual, why are not printed praises to God equally

objectionable? Why have hymns of *praise* to Jehovah been printed, and sung from generation to generation by dissenters, and yet they refuse to have prayers to God, suited for all circumstances and all conditions, printed, read, and repeated, as are those of the Church of England? If God, from on high, deigns to listen to and accept our *printed hymns and psalms*, why should he not also deign to do so with our *printed prayers*? Yes, the dissenting extemporaneous mode of praying in public is by no means reverential, pious, or wise. Dissenting worship in 1841 savours of its origin; it is man. Preaching is exalted above prayer, and the fallible word of man too often usurps the place of the infallible word of God.

I observed during the whole time that I resided in the family of Mr. Griffiths, that the apprentice, the other pupil, the servants, the children, and myself, got wearied with the long, uncertain prayers of both the master and mistress of the family, as none of us knew what was to come next. There were no responses to make. Even the Lord's Prayer when said by those who led family worship, was not repeated by the rest of the family. The same sort of feeling of fatigue I observed in the congregations. Some stood, some sate, some half

knelt, some read, some looked about, some repeated after the minister until a phrase or two came which they could not understand, or with which they could not agree, and then they lost the thread of the discourse (for it was no prayer), and repeated no longer. Sometimes a minister prayed on a Sunday morning for a quarter of an hour, others for twenty minutes, and a few for half-an-hour. Then there were complimentary prayers, in which the minister of the place, his wife, family, children, and the deacons and wives and families, and I know not who else besides, were all brought forward by name or designation, and were extolled before the throne of God, as if they had been saints in heaven instead of sinners on earth. Then some prayers I have heard pointedly personal, when a deacon, a member, or some one in the congregation, had offended the officiating or stated minister. Then I have heard prayers full of bitterness and unkindness, reproaches or insinuations, which excited not the pious ejaculations of the assembled congregation, but the nods and gestures of approbation, or the shakes of the head and other signs of dissatisfaction, of those who listened not for themselves, but for others. Sometimes I have heard God addressed in

verses of hymns with annotations upon them, and I am sorry to add, sometimes, in a sort of declamatory harangue, as though God was a judge of some human court or petty tribunal. Sometimes I have heard a dissenting minister ask, "Did I not *hit* his case in my *prayer*?" when speaking of some individual; and at other times I have heard a member of a dissenting congregation declare, "that he knew who was meant by the minister in his prayer, for he had told him he would pray '*at* him.' " This is the system of dissenting praying. There are some exceptions to the rule, I admit, but they are not to be found in the political-religious school, nor amongst those ministers who were a few years since the students at the modern dissenting colleges.

Charles Wyatt, my fellow pupil, was the son of a dissenting solicitor of some eminence; and as we soon became good friends, especially as his family was not wholly unknown to mine, I occasionally spent a Sunday in fine weather at his father's house, and heard during the afternoon the interests, views, and plans of the dissenters conversed on with freedom and energy. I remember an interesting and important conversation which once took place between a client of Mr. Wyatt's, who was also

a dissenter, with the father of my fellow pupil. The conversation was important, as it convinced me that a great change had taken place within the then few past years in the views and objects of the dissenting body. The client of Mr. Wyatt was a Nonconformist of the old school, who saw with pain the change which had occurred in the feelings of the rising dissenting generation, as well as of the leaders, towards the Church of England, its revenues, priesthood, and altar.

Mr. Smith (for such was the name of Mr. Wyatt's client) observed, in reply to a long and vehement apostrophe against the Church, "And yet, Mr. Wyatt, if the Church of England be all that you say it is, how came it to pass that our *old* ministers of forty and fifty years ago, as well as those whom we have lost during the last few years, never displayed the violence now manifested by the leaders of our body? Do you suppose they were less anxious than our new men are, for the advancement of the pure gospel?"

Mr. Wyatt. Excuse me, Mr. Smith, that is not the question. Such men as you refer to were the connecting links between an old and a new state of things. Some had still their attachments to the Church of England. This

was the case with John Eyre, with George Whitfield, with John Wesley, with Lady Huntingdon, and was afterwards with Rowland Hill, Matthew Wilks, John Hyatt, and a host of others belonging to that school. They paid more attention to the *spiritual* part of the secession of the Methodists and dissenters from the Church of England, than they did to the organization of churches and congregations in the dissenting interests.

Mr. Smith. In other words, they cared for the *souls* of men, whilst the new leaders of dissenters are seeking to place their partisans on a worldly eminence, and are indulging a spirit of rivalry with the Church of England.

Mr. Wyatt. No, I think not. The new leaders attend to both the spiritual and temporal rights and privileges of dissenters, and will not consent to be considered in any respect as *inferior* to the Church of England.

Mr. Smith. Inferior, no; nor would I listen for a moment, Mr. Wyatt, to the term *inferiority*; but it strikes me that the new leaders of the dissenters seek even more than equality with the Church. It seems as though they wished to overthrow the Church, and proclaim themselves the sole authorized teachers of the people.

Mr. Wyatt. Of course to overthrow the *domination* of the Church, Mr. Smith, since for what other object than to attack and overthrow the Church was *The Protestant Society* established? And yet, I believe, you subscribe to its funds. And for what other object have the deputies of the three denominations met, year after year in later times, and organized their protests and resolutions? Is it not a fact that we are all united as one man, whatever our minor differences on points of doctrine and ordinances may be, to overthrow the connection which exists between the Church and the State?

Mr. Smith. We wish to get rid of a *State* religion, I admit. That was *always* the favourite object of Doctor Bogue. He was the very first dissenting minister I ever heard openly proclaim, "that all church establishments had been curses to the church of Christ, and to the world; and that, for his part, if he had to select one established church from the rest, as the one to which he should prefer to be attached, he should not know how to do so, *for there was not a pin between them.*" I remember, however, the apprehension felt by Mr. Butterworth, and the Wesleyan body, when they joined the dissenters, at the time of Lord Sid-

mouth's bill, in order to petition against that measure. Doctor Adam Clarke was greatly opposed to the union, and expressed, on more than one occasion, his fears that, bad as in his opinion Lord Sidmouth's bill was, more evil was to be apprehended to the Wesleyans from their being mistaken by the Church of England and by the State for dissenters, in the common acceptation of that term, than from the Bill.

Mr. Wyatt. You are quite accurate, Sir, in your recollections; and it was not till a committee had been self-named to oppose that bill, and forms of petitions sent off with rolls of parchment to all the known dissenting congregations in England and Wales, to obtain signatures thereto, that the Wesleyans came forward. They would not have done so to the last, had not their itinerant system, in their opinion, been attacked by the bill of his lordship.

Mr. Smith. From that time commenced the assaults on the Church of England.

Mr. Wyatt. Not immediately, Mr. Smith; for the chiefs soon became divided, and the Wesleyans returned to their entrenched camp.

Mr. Smith. Oh yes, I know that they, like myself, feared the young and hot heads of just-

liberated students, or striplings in both theology and dissent, who, because the reactionary measure of Lord Sidmouth had been defeated, thought, forsooth, that they could obtain an equal number of petitions and signatures against the Church of England.

Mr. Wyatt. Besides, our *orthodox* portion of dissenters had serious apprehensions as to admitting the *heterodox* fraction into their company, and Dr. Rees, Mr. Belsham, and Mr. Aspland were objected to by Mr. Samuel Mills, Dr. Waugh, Mr. Roby, and the family of the Wilsons.

Mr. Smith. It is really surprising, Mr. Wyatt, with what small means, little real union, and never ending divisions among dissenters, they withstood the bill of Lord Sidmouth. The ministers and laity, who assembled on 15th June, 1809, (and I was one of the number), at the library of Dr. Williams, in Red Cross-street, looked at each other more as enemies than coadjutors; and whilst we were all boasting of our union, in the face of the church and the government, if they could but have known our *real* situation they would never have yielded. I remember, Mr. Belsham, the Arian preacher, was opposed to our measures.

He feared the progress of field-preaching and itinerancy, and, it is said, encouraged Lord Sidmouth in his bill.

Mr. Wyatt. I know but little of Mr. Belsham's proceedings, but very many dissenting ministers of the old school, averse to field preaching and itinerancy, and attached to the sleepy system of the stiff Presbyterian and old dissenting churches, refused to have any thing to do with the then popular movement against high church principles. One of them, in London, declared "that for his part, he thought Lord Sidmouth's bill a very good one, as its operation would be favourable to ancient Nonconformist principles, and therefore opposed to the violence," as he called it, "of the new school."

Mr. Smith. One of our most successful weapons, was the press. We set to work all the magazines, newspapers, and reviews we could influence, and so multiplied our *small* band by a variety of measures, all apparently proceeding from various quarters, but in reality only from one, that we seemed to others to have as many heads and committees as we in reality had hands, for we could scarcely muster twenty in all the land.

Mr. Wyatt. You mean twenty leaders.

Mr. Smith. Of course, I do. When we first

met, we were all staggered, and knew not what to do. The old men were divided in opinion. The middle-aged were for temperate and respectful protests. But the young men appealed to the passions of the people, and the petitions were signed by tens of thousands who never read them.

Mr. Wyatt. That's very true. I remember hearing a letter read from a Welsh Calvinistic minister, in which, on sending up the petition of his congregation to London, he said, that he gave out from his pulpit, "that if they wished to meet the next Sunday in that chapel, they must one and all stop after service, and sign a paper that was on the communion table; and that those who could not read or write, must get some one who could to sign for them; and one man signed for twenty-four."

Mr. Smith. I remember the Rev. Mr. Johnson gave out to his people, that the petition to be signed in the vestry was one of life or death to dissent, and that if the chapel was not to be shut up with their consent, and he, their minister, thrown into prison, they must all sign the document that night before they retired to rest.

Mr. Wyatt. But when once this excitement was over, then came the *real* difficulty. What

was to be done next ? The old-fashioned and careful were for stopping there, and for remaining satisfied with the result. But the ardent and younger dissenters either formed themselves into a new society, called THE PROTESTANT SOCIETY, or got admitted into the deputies from the three denominations, and determined, one and all, to demand a *new Toleration Act*, and to oppose the intolerant portion of the Established Church.

Mr. Smith. Yes ; but still, Mr. Wyatt, I remember how zealously they all protested in the public prints their *respect for the Established Church*, and which, indeed, they were obliged to do, for otherwise Mr. Samuel Mills, the chairman of the Protestant Society, and a nominal member of the Church of England, would have withdrawn. Indeed, at that time, in spite of the then recent defeat of Lord Sidmouth, if any society had been established *avowedly* to destroy the Church of England, every one of the old men, except, perhaps, Dr. David Bogue, would have left the ranks of what were inaccurately styled “the *united dissenters*.”

Mr. Wyatt. Still, Mr. Smith, some of the *old* dissenting ministers stood firmly by the side of the new leaders, and defended their

zeal. Rowland Hill, though half a clergyman, was one of the most energetic just at that time. But the Clayton's, both father and sons, stood aloof; and so did the Burders. This was not the case with Mr. Platt, Mr. John Townsend, Mr. Roby, Mr. Thorpe, Mr. Parsons, Doctor Styles, and many others. They enlisted on the side of the movement party.

Mr. Smith. But with varied degrees of zeal. I assure you there was, for several years, much hesitation felt by the mass of respectable dissenters as to supporting their new teachers.

Mr. Wyatt. Oh, yes. It was only as the old links in the chain were broken, and as the old ministers died and the new men from Homerton, Highbury, Hackney, Newport Pagnell, and Rotherham, succeeded them, that the present clear and certain plans of the dissenters were developed. William Smith, of Norwich, was one of the most active in the new turn of affairs. As almost the only dissenter then in parliament (unless Mr. Butterworth, the former Wesleyan member for Coventry, be called a dissenter), he was of great use to us all. William Smith was a Socinian, and, therefore, not over popular with our old *orthodox* ministers; but then he understood dissenting sects, and terms,

and phrases, and did not make the wretched bungling of Lord Holland and Earl Stanhope. Poor Lord Stanhope was an excellent friend of our cause, but he always would call us *Puritans* and *Anabaptists*, forgetting our new nomenclature.

Mr. Smith. I remember, too, Lord Dacre presenting a petition from some Baptists and Independents who had united in one petition against Lord Sidmouth's bill; and he said, "My Lords, I hold in my hand no less than five hundred Anabaptists, Puritan, Independent Wesleyan dissenters." The house laughed outright, and he corrected himself by saying, "*their petition*, I mean, My Lords." I remember also a Baptist minister declaring "that when he saw his name surrounded by the Arian, Socinian, and other *miscellaneous* dissenters, on the roll of the petition, he could not help exclaiming, From such society as this *I cannot but dissent.*"

Mr. Wyatt. And yet without this union, at that time, the bill would have passed. As the old ministers have died off, we have become more classified. The Lady Huntingdon and George Whitfield partisans have diminished in numbers and become split. The Socinians have separated from the deputies of the three

denominations. The Independents have shaken off that *dead weight* which their old ministers always were upon them, and wholly new views are now entertained by that body.

Mr. Smith. And yet I am not at all sure, Mr. Wyatt, that the change, *spiritually* speaking, has been a good one. There has been a multiplication of interests and chapels, I admit; but I doubt very much whether spiritual religion is on the increase amongst us.

Mr. Wyatt. Perhaps not, Mr. Smith, perhaps not; but then, you know, it had become indispensable to establish ourselves as regular and authorized bodies, to obtain a legal and parliamentary recognition, not only of our existence, but of our trust-deeds, charities, opinions, and independence.

Mr. Smith. Why had this become necessary?

Mr. Wyatt. As preliminary to that battle which *must* be fought, sooner or later, between us and the Church of England.

Mr. Smith. What battle? not for ascendancy, I hope?

Mr. Wyatt. No; but the battle for the disconnection of the Church from the State.

Mr. Smith. A most dangerous one to fight, though, Mr. Wyatt.

Mr. Wyatt. Undoubtedly; but we are preparing the way for more ardent men who will succeed us, and who will demand by petitions, public meetings, and addresses to the throne, as well as by their journals, resolutions, magazines and reviews, that Episcopacy may be separated from the State, the Church lands all forfeited to the nation, and that those who like Episcopacy may go to the church, but paying their own clergy, supporting their own churches, and thus placing Episcopacy and Independency on an equal footing.

Mr. Smith. All this will take a very long while, Mr. Wyatt. The Church has many thousands of friends amongst those whom we are accustomed to call dissenters, and I am quite sure that neither the Scotch Church nor even perhaps the *English* Presbyterians would join this movement. I am sure the Wesleyans will not; nor, indeed, the Calvinistic Methodists and Huntingtonians.

Mr. Wyatt. The fact is, that as to the Presbyterians, many are now so called who are no more Presbyterians than I am. The Socinians call themselves Presbyterians very often, and yet are not so, either in doctrine or discipline. They only assume this title as a

most convenient "*nom de guerre*." On their secession, a handful of Burgher dissenters, who in England merge their original Presbyterian discipline in Independency, rushed into the vacuum, and looked out for our chapels and congregations. But the clergy of the Scottish Church resident in England, who are Presbyterians, are some of our worst foes; and I am sorry to say, have on every occasion stood forward as the allies and friends of the Church of England. It is a good plan, you know, Mr. Smith, to crowd our petitions to the legislature on all occasions with the title of "*Presbyterians*," though really we might as well insert Southcottians and Swedenborgians, for of real *bonâ fide* Presbyterians who think and act with us, we have none but a few Burgher dissenters, who are reprobated by the true Scotch Presbyterian Church.

Mr. Smith. The Baptists, I think, Mr. Wyatt, have become much more inimical to the Church of England than were Mr. Fuller, Robert Hall, Dr. Rippon, Dr. Ryland, and Dr. Carey. *They* never headed any societies for opposing tithes or church-rates, or for any of that class of objects which are now being pursued by our Baptist brethren. And really such men as

Cox, Dyer, Hinton, Overbury, Steane, and Shenstone, are but indifferent successors to their learned and pious predecessors.

Mr. Wyatt. Why, as to that, Mr. Smith, there is a great falling off among the Independent and English Presbyterian ministers, when compared with former periods of the history of both those bodies; but then we live in bustling times, and the same kind of men who exercised an immense influence seventy, or sixty, or forty years ago, would not do now for the new sort of movement and feeling amongst us. We want public speakers, men of popular debating talent, and wrestlers and warriors now.

Mr. Smith. Yet look now at William Jay, of Bath; few men have been more useful, and none more respected amongst us, and yet he has kept himself aloof from our party and political agitation. So Mr. Clayton, sen., and Mr. Burder, sen., have been very quiet dissenters, and yet have large congregations.

Mr. Wyatt. Still, Mr. Smith, these are not the men for us now. We want to give a more efficient and decisive character to dissent, and to place all sects on an equal footing.

Mr. Smith. Then, indeed, you must take the

young men fresh and hot from our academies and colleges, for all others will fail you.

I have placed this conversation a little beforehand, I admit, in order of *date*, but it was one of those which contributed to shake my juvenile dissenterism, and tended to show me that there was something "rotten in the state of Denmark."

Several months after I entered the family of Mr. Griffiths, his eldest daughter came home to spend the holidays. She was the blooming maiden of fifteen, with eyes as black as the wild gazelle's—with a voice all melody, a luxuriant abundance of hair, all the freshness of a child of nature, the simplicity of an open and generous soul, and the natural modesty of truth and virtue. My boyish heart was soon smitten; or, in plain terms, I fell in love. Sophia Griffiths was my first, as, in all probability, she will be my last love; but many years of anxiety and difficulty rolled over our young heads ere our mutual affection was consummated at the hymeneal altar. Mrs. Griffiths, who soon observed my partiality for her daughter's society, kept her apart from mine as much as it was possible, and rather curtailed than lengthened her vacations. Our conversations during

those periods were always in the society of others; and so narrowly were we watched, that, until I was nearly nineteen years of age, I had not one single moment in which to tell her that I loved her, or to receive from her an assurance of reciprocal affection. She had then left school, and had accepted an invitation to spend a year with her grandmother: such an arrangement being made by Mr. and Mrs. Griffiths, to prevent our seeing each other in their house. We passed a few minutes, and but a few, together, without the presence of a third party, just prior to her departure; and in those we fixed, by an exchange of sentiments and expressions, our future destinies. But Sophia, like myself, had been brought up a dissenter; and as my mind became enlightened on controversial questions, I longed to communicate to her, first my doubts, and then my convictions on the great subject of Church establishments. Until after my articles had expired, and I was free to act for myself, this privilege was, however, denied me; and Mr. and Mrs. Griffiths, though now the kindest and the best of parents, would at one time "have rather seen their daughter remain unmarried all her life, than be married to a Churchman."

I had resided in the family of Mr. Griffiths

about a year, when I was requested by that gentleman to assist his wife in making two dozen copies of the following circular, to be addressed to some of his leading dissenting friends in the parish in which we resided, and to others who, though not belonging to it, "*also took a deep and lively interest in the question of church-rates.*"

"My dear Sir,

"As I know you are one of those who take a deep and lively interest in the question of *church-rates*, allow me to invite your company on Friday evening next, at seven precisely, to meet a few friends, with the view of defeating the church-rate proposed to be made in this parish on Monday week next. I shall be happy to see any friend of yours who may be disposed to concur with us in our intended measures.

"I am, my dear Sir,

"Your's truly,

"JAMES GRIFFITHS."

The Independent minister, at whose meeting-house we attended, was the *secret* but real promoter of this convocation; and many were the calls, chats, and conversations, held over "tea, coffee, and muffins," before the circular was sent out, and the meeting convened. Mr.

Griffiths visited likewise his dissenting friend and solicitor, MR. WYATT, and together they concocted the following resolutions, prior to the day fixed for the gathering of the dissenting protesters.

“ At a highly respectable meeting of the most influential proprietors and occupiers of houses and other property, in the parish of St. ——— held the 14th June, 18—

“ *Thomas Childish, Esq.*, in the chair,

“ It was unanimously resolved,

“ 1st. That this parish contains 40,000 souls, and yet the churches therein can only hold about one-sixth of that number.

“ 2nd. That as there is no demand for *new* churches, and as none are erecting, it is evident that five-sixths of the population are not Episcopalians.

“ 3rd. That any attempt to build new churches in such a state of things would be illiberal, unjust, and wicked.

“ 4th. That as only one sixth of the population of this parish go to church, it is clearly not the duty of the other five sixths, not going, to contribute to the reparation of a church at which they do not attend.

“ 5th. That this meeting has therefore heard with disgust and indignation that an attempt has been made to levy a rate for the repairs of the Church of St. ——— in this parish, on all the inhabitants

thereof, although only one-sixth of the parish go to church.

“ 6th. That this meeting therefore pledges itself to oppose such rate by every ordinary and extraordinary effort in its power, as well as by every legal means, and invites all its fellow parishioners, of *whatever name or denomination*, to join it in its proposed opposition.

“ 7th. That Thomas Childish, Esq., William Patison, Esq., and James Griffiths, Esq., aided by (*names left blank till the meeting should take place*), do constitute the committee for carrying these resolutions into effect, and that they be printed and circulated through the parish, and be published in the Morning Chronicle, Sun, and Globe newspapers, and in such other papers as the committee may approve.

“ 8th. That coaches be provided to convey the opponents to the rate to church, to vote against that unjust and wicked measure, and that some be also stationed at “ *The Cat and Magpie*,” “ *The Hen and Chickens*,” “ *The Pewter Pot*,” and “ *The Rum and Punch Bowl* ” public-houses, where cold ham, beef, beer, and spirits and water, be prepared for all who shall be disposed to accept of refreshments.

“ 9th. That the thanks of this meeting be presented to our able and excellent host for the admirable manner in which he has lent his room, and the high sanction of his name and fame on this occasion; and that he be requested to act as treasurer to a sub-

scription to be made for carrying these objects into effect.

“10th. That William Wyatt, Esq., be appointed solicitor to the committee, and be authorized to take all necessary measures, with the view of carrying the object of this meeting into effect.

“11th. That the thanks of this meeting be presented to the true, firm, and uncompromising friend of dissenters, *Thomas Childish, Esq.*, our very excellent chairman, for his able, manly, and intrepid conduct in the chair.”

There they were, all drawn out, cut and dried, for the Friday meeting. But who was to copy them? Myself and my fellow pupil Wyatt were enlisted in this ungodly service; and alas! for our poor fingers, we had to make a copy for the chairman, another for the dissenting attorney, and a third for general use, besides two copies of each on separate slips of paper, to place in the hands of the mover and seconder of each resolution. Wyatt and myself wished the church, the rate, Mr. Griffiths, and Mr. Childish, I know not where, perhaps at the bottom of the sea, during the half-day devoted to copying these *to-be-passed* resolutions; apprehending also that this was only the *commencement* of our career of copiers of circulars and resolutions. At last, Friday ar-

rived. Muffins, tea, crumpets, coffee, toast, cake, wine, and liquors, were all provided in fearful quantities, whilst the drawing-room fire was lighted at three o'clock, "that the room might be warm against the *gentlemen* came." At a quarter before seven, Mr. Wyatt arrived, attended by a clerk of his *red tape* profession, who brought in a *blue bag*, which *blue bag* contained certain books covered with *brown calf*, and pamphlets with *blue paper* covers, called "*Term Reports*." Mr. Wyatt was *not* a parishioner, but "*as one good turn deserves another*," Mr. Griffiths, who had received a handsome premium with that gentleman's articed son, now sought to put a good job in the way of his pupil's father. Mr. Childish, Mr. Pattison, and Messrs. Brick, Stunt, Squibb, Martin, and Sadwork, were announced in rotation, and at last there were just fourteen persons present, including myself and my brother pupil, who occupied ourselves in handing about "*the good things*" to our parish dissenting reformers. I made my fellow pupil Wyatt laugh, by asking him "if this small meeting of only ten *real* parishioners" (since Mr. Wyatt and his clerk, and myself and young Wyatt, were mere interlopers), "was to be taken as the five-sixths of the 40,000 souls declared by

the resolutions *not* to be Episcopalians ?” After the eatables and drinkables had been disposed of, and after Mrs. Griffiths had sent up from the dining-room such a superabundance of tea and coffee, that at last they were really drugs on the market, Mr. Griffiths whispered to Mr. Wyatt, and Mr. Wyatt to Mr. Childish, and then Mr. Griffiths proposed that Mr. Childish should take the chair. *Mr. Childish* looked his name, affected great humility, hemmed and coughed several times, and then began as follows:—

“Mr. Griffiths, and fellow parishioners and friends,—I have been requested to take the chair; and I have accepted this post, and will endeavour to do my duty. We are met in a righteous cause, to seek to disconnect the Church from the State. For this is our REAL object. We are few in numbers, but if we are united in mind, we shall destroy this *hydra*. The *snake* has been *scotched* before by us, gentlemen; it is now our duty to kill it.”

Some of THE parishioners did not seem very well to understand this “*hydra*” business, nor yet the “*snake*” affair, and Mr. Brick asked Mr. Squibb in an under tone, “*What does he say?*” To which Mr. Squibb replied, “Oh! it’s nothing that concerns us; it’s about

some '*Scotch*' affair, but has nothing to do with *our* parish."

Mr. Childish went on for some time in his hyperbolical and truly interesting strain, to the great delight of all his more educated hearers, but concluded by saying, that Mr. Wyatt would now address them at some length on the question of church-rates.

Mr. Wyatt began his speech by declaring "that he felt the most unaffected diffidence in rising to address so intelligent and enlightened a society, and that nothing but a sense of duty, yes, of imperious duty, could have induced him to leave his office that evening, where he was required to prepare the briefs for the approaching trial of '*Gubbins* against *Beresford*,' which was a question raised by his client, Mrs. Gubbins, who, he was proud to say, was a chandler shopkeeper in Shropshire, against a clergyman of the Church of England, who had *dared* to refuse to read the Church-prayers over her departed husband, *SIMPLY because he had been what was called a Socinian!* Yes, his client, Mrs. Gubbins, was resolved to show the member of an ancient family, the parochial clergyman, that she, though a dealer in butter and brooms, in soap and snuff, in candles and cocoa, was not to

be beaten down by an aristocratic parson. [Great applause.] It *was* true, indeed, that her husband *was* a *Socinian*, but what of that? Was not the clergyman parish property? [Cries of ‘*To be sure he is!*’] Yes, gentlemen, and we will *make* the parish priest, yes, we will *make* him, *force* him, *compel* him, to bury *Socinians* as well as others in the Episcopalian and Trinitarian burial-ground. [Cries of ‘*Bravo! bravo!*’] But, gentlemen, I must not be drawn away from the subject of this evening’s discussion. I could not, however, help referring to this *admirable* and excellent woman, who *from principle*, yes, I repeat, *from principle*, has thus asserted in her person the *right* which *we dissenters* have to *compel* the clergy of what is *falsely* styled the *National Church*, to bury *all* persons of *all* religions, and to read *in* the church, as well as *over their graves*, the service of the very church from which when living they dissented, but to which after their deaths they desired to read these lessons of both right and duty. [Great cheering, and Mr. Stunt became so excited that he cried aloud, ‘*We will all be Mrs. Gubbinses!*’] And so we *will*,” continued Mr. Wyatt. “*Yes, we will all be Mrs. Gubbinses!* Now, gentlemen, let us look at the question of CHURCH-

RATES. What is a church-rate? A rate in favour of the Church, a paltry and shabby tax, an imposition, a piece of humbug. Yes, gentlemen, humbug! For it *cannot* be *enforced*, it *cannot* be *levied*, it is only a rate *imposed* by the strong on the weak, by the church-frequenter on the church non-frequenters. [A gentleman present named Foster, who, though a dissenter, was a mild and moderate man, here observed, 'Yes, Mr. Wyatt, but the church-frequenters pay it too, and by far the largest part!'] Well," said Mr. Wyatt, "let these church-frequenters pay their *hateful tax*, if they will, but we will not! ['*No! no! never!*' cried Messrs. Childish, Brick, Stunt, Squibb, and Sadwork.] And," continued Mr. Wyatt, "what matters it to us, that in the course of centuries 10,000 parish churches have been built and endowed by private persons, by kings, and by legislative grants, if those who founded them will not keep them in repair? What do we want with their churches? If all of them were shut up to-morrow we should be just as happy, prosperous, wealthy, moral, and religious. Do *we* ask the Churchman to build *our* chapels? ['No,' said Mr. Foster, 'but then, Mr. Wyatt, ours is *not* a *State* religion; *we* have *separated* from it.']

Yes, we *have* separated from it," continued Mr. Wyatt, "glorious separation that it is! and for *this* reason we will *not pay one farthing of its rates*. [Mr. Foster again interrupted Mr. Wyatt, by observing, that such a reason was none at all, since at that rate a portion of the members of any country, a set of thieves, for example, might declare that they separated from it in order to avoid the penalties of the law for their offences, but this would not deprive the law of its just force and influence against them. The questions, in his opinion, were, first, were church-rates legal? and second, was the particular church-rate about to be voted at the approaching vestry, necessary? On the first point, he wished for information; and on the second, for statistics.] Gentlemen," continued Mr. Wyatt, "let church-rates be ever so *legal*, I say *resist* such *legality*; and let this particular and proposed church-rate be ever so necessary for the old church of this parish, it is not necessary to *us*, to *you dissenters*, and therefore prevent its being voted; or, if voted, prevent its being paid—refuse to pay it." [Mr. Foster again spoke a few words, and said, 'If church-rates be *legal*, I can do no more than ask the legislature to repeal the law. And if this particular church-

rate be necessary to the church of this parish, then, so long as church-rates are *legal*, I cannot oppose it, except its amount be excessive.']

Mr. Wyatt now appealed to *Mr. Childish*, and asked "if it was possible for him to continue his speech, when thus interrupted by *Mr. Foster*?" The chairman decided that *Mr. Foster* was out of order; and *Mr. Foster* begged pardon, and said, "As I see, however, that we are not met to discuss, but simply to vote, certain resolutions, previously prepared, I will not trouble you further, especially as my presence is required at a '*sick man's friendly society*,' where I hope to do more good than I possibly can here. So, *Mr. Chairman*, do not count upon me as one of you in *this* affair: but whenever you have any *charitable* object in view, I hope I shall not be backward." So *Mr. Foster* retired.

Mr. Wyatt. We had better be without *lukewarm men*, *Mr. Chairman*.

The Chairman. I think so too, *Mr. Wyatt*. Will you proceed?

Mr. Wyatt. Well then, gentlemen, what do you say to a fact I assert, that the church-rates in this country amount to nearly one million per annum?* [*Mr. Brick* called out,

* This is a specimen of dissenting fairness and dissenting

‘*Horrible!*’] Yes, Mr. Brick, it *is* horrible. Nearly one million of money raised and spent in *church-rates*. And *how* is it spent? Not in repairs; no, not £100,000 out of a million, in repairs.* [Mr. Childish, the chairman, exclaimed, ‘*Gracious Heavens! is it possible?*’] Yes, Mr. Chairman, it is not only *possible*, but it is a *fact*. And what is done with the rest? Shall I tell you? It is expended in sinecures, in salaries, in feastings, in sacramental wine, and various other *equally disgraceful* objects. Gentlemen, we are told that the dissenters derive benefit from the Church of England and a national religion, though they go not to church. This is *not* true. What matters it to *us* that a national religion has the tendency of making men *moral and religious*, if they do not belong to our dissenting chapels—if they do not frequent *them*? [The Independent minister at whose chapel Mr. Griffiths’s family attended, had, till now, remained quiet; but he was so delighted at the last question put by Mr. Wyatt, that he called out, ‘*Excellent! excellent!* Certainly,

statistics. They only amount to about £597,000 per annum.
—(Author of “My Life.”)

* Another proof of dissenting accuracy. Out of £597,000, £250,000 are spent in repairs.—(Author of “My Life.”)

of what use are the Churchmen to us, if they will not attend our chapels ?']

"It is only, gentlemen, such *sham* dissenters as Doctor Dwight who would tell us that established religions are necessary to freedom and happiness. Look at France, gentlemen; see how free and happy she is; and yet where is *her national* religion? Religion, gentlemen, is an affair to be settled between man and his Maker; and if we had no churches *to-morrow*, we should have more religion than *at present*. Gentlemen, the revenues of the Church are *immense*, not less than thirty millions.* [Renewed cries of '*Horrible!*'] Cut down the bishops—overthrow the cathedrals—apply the pruning knife every where, and we should soon hear no more of church-rates, or of the poor's-rate either, for the church revenues could pay all. [*'That would be delightful,'* cried Mr. Stunt, in the very agony of anticipated enjoyment.] Yes, Mr. Chairman," continued Mr. Wyatt, "it would be delightful to see the mitres and the lawn sleeves all selling at auction, for the benefit of the nation!!! I am

* If I had known then, what I do now, I might have informed the meeting that the *whole* revenues of the Church of England are but £3,500,000, only a little more than at the rate of £300 for each parish!!!

happy to inform you, gentlemen, that the dissenters are *alive* every where to this *momentous* subject. We should also seek to prevail on *Jews, Roman Catholics, heterodox dissenters of all classes*, and even men of *no religion*, or *infidels*, to aid us, for why should *they*, who have not the *happiness* to be *pious*, as *we are*, be compelled to contribute to the reparation of the national churches? Gentlemen, we are all of us interested in the destruction of this church. If it *will* repair its edifices, let it do so from its surplus revenues. Let the archbishops, bishops, deans, prebendaries, canons, be made to disgorge, one and all; and if these ugly old buildings *are* to remain standing, let them be repaired by the church itself. Gentlemen, if we can once succeed in defeating the church-rates altogether, we, the dissenters of England, shall be able to proclaim that the union of Church and State is at an end; and that thenceforth the Church of England will be an empty title, to which the Episcopalians, as a *then* isolated sect, will have no right to lay claim. This, remember, gentlemen, is the great object of our glorious struggle! It is *not* the mere payment of the tax, for in nearly two-thirds of the parishes of England church-rates are seldom, if ever, levied—but it is to disjoin the

State from the Church that we must be prepared to make every effort."

"*To be sure we must,*" said Mr. Brick. "And who can tell but *that, some day or other, ours may become the established religion?*"

This exclamation of Mr. Brick so shocked the dissenting minister in the corner, "lest," as he said, "such a hope, or the expression of such a wish, should be known out of that room, that he rose to declare that it was not with the hope of slipping into the shoes of the Church that they made this rally against church-rates, but simply to overthrow the establishment, and then *they would see what was to be done next.*"

Mr. Wyatt spoke for another half-hour about the *illegality* of church-rates; but on this point Messrs. Brick and Stunt admitted in my presence, after the meeting was over, "that the orator was *not so great* as he had been on the other points of his discourse."

After Mr. Wyatt had concluded amidst thunders of applause, which lasted several minutes, the Chairman asked Mr. Brick (who, though an ignorant and vulgar man, was wealthy, and possessed a great many houses in the parish) to move the FIRST resolution. I cannot pretend to report the other speeches;

but Mr. Brick's oration was too original and curious ever to be forgotten.

“ Mr. Childish, or Mr. Chairman, it's no great matter which, I suppose,—I really don't know what to say, as to that gentleman's speech there (Mr. Wyatt). It has quite absorbed me. I say, with him, no church-rates, no nothing. I don't mean *no houses*, for I've got a rare lot of 'em, small and large, in this parish; and if we get rid o' the church-rates, it'll be a good bit o' money in my pocket. Now, as I was coming here to-day, to this very meeting, I was making a calculation what it would be worth to my property to get rid of all church-rates for ever. So I said to myself, suppose I calculate twenty years' purchase only. Well, £100 a-year for twenty years will get rid of £2,000 for me, besides interest, and all that sort of thing. Now, how can I be otherwise than glad to come to a meeting to improve my property in this sort of way? Then, who can tell me that if we get rid of church-rates, we may not afterwards get rid of poor's-rates and land-tax, and assessed taxes? Why not? If we don't want churches, what do we want with King, Lords, and Commons, say I? Eh, Mr. Childish? You know you have property, as well as I have; and these drawbacks on our

receipts every quarter are horrible things. So, gentlemen, for these reasons, I move to have no more church-rates."

"No, no," said Mr. Wyatt, "you have to move the FIRST resolution."

"Oh, never mind your resolutions," said Mr. Brick, "I can't bother my head about *them*; but no more church-rates, eh?"

So all laughed and joked, and passed the resolutions.

There were two or three alterations made to them, however; one suggested by Mr. Childish, "that something ought *perhaps* to be said of Mr. Wyatt's speech and efforts in the resolution relating to himself," the friendliness and force of which request were approved and adopted; and the other by Mr. Stunt, who thought the committee should have power to add to their numbers, and which was likewise agreed to. It was also resolved, that

Mr. Childish (the Independent) should wait on *Mr. Levy*, the wealthy *Jew*, to ask *him* to join the committee, and influence all his *body* against the church-rates.

That *Mr. Patterson* (the Baptist) should see *Mr. Cripple*, the rich *Socinian*, and entreat him to obtain the aid of all the *heterodox dissenters*.

That *Mr. Griffiths* (the Independent) should

see Mr. O'Reilly, the *Papist* priest, and implore him to attend the next meeting, and to issue the circulars to all his flock of the *Romish* persuasion, to meet at "*The Hen and Chickens*" on the day of the vestry, and proceed "*en masse*" to vote against the rate.

That *Mr. Brick* (the Calvinistic Methodist) should canvass all his tenants, and obtain all their attendance.

That *Mr. Stunt* should get up a meeting of the Irish at the "*Pewter Pot*," and organize "a cut and thrust" gang in case of a poll, as well as a gang to hoot down all speakers *for* the rate at the vestry.

That *Mr. Squibb* should wait on as many *ladies* as possible, and prevail on them to prevail on their husbands to attend and vote against the rate; and

That *Messrs. Martin and Sadwork* should act under Mr. Wyatt's directions, and seek to procure two or three good speakers *against* the rate on the day of meeting; and above all, look to the glass-coaches and *public-houses*.

When the meeting was terminated, the chairman did *not* leave the chair; but having a large bowl of punch, with glasses and a ladle, placed before him, ladled out to the assembled

reformers some very excellent beverage, of which all partook with great pleasure, after so much excitement and exhaustion. The witching hour had struck its twelve notes of midnight before the house was cleared.

Mrs. Griffiths “was in an *agony* to know if all had gone off well;” and on being assured in the affirmative, said, “Now boys, it’s too late to have prayers to-night, you can go to bed.” So off we went, delighted with our dismissal. The next day the resolutions were printed, folded, and put into circulation; and my fellow pupil and myself were sent to Mr. Wyatt’s, to aid in all these arrangements. The committee was daily increased—Jews, Arians, and Freethinkers, Papists, Infidels, and Universalists, that sad race “the Separatists,” and that mistaken class of dissenters, “the Quakers,” were all represented. And Mr. Childish, on perusing the list of names when the committee of opposition was complete, exclaimed, “Well, this is delightful!—there is not any imaginable sect of believers or unbelievers, Jews or Christians, Papists or Protestants (except Episcopalians), in this large parish, who are not faithfully represented by one or more of their body!” My youthful

mind felt to recoil at this union; but when I said so to Mrs. Griffiths, she assured me "THAT I WAS VERY YOUNG."

The whole of the next week was devoted to active canvassing, to the publication of squibs, the finding out some two or three parishioners who would consent to speak against all church-rates, and particularly against the one to be proposed, and in efforts to form the united committee, and to obtain subscriptions towards the expenses of the contest.

The Rev. Mr. Stafford, the vicar, heard of all these measures with regret. Ardently did he desire to live in charity and peace with all his parishioners; and nothing would have so gladdened his heart as to have seen the sheep in his fold unmolested by wolves, and uninfected by spiritual disease. But he felt that, as the authorized, as well as evangelical shepherd of so large a parish, he had a most important duty to fulfil; and that, however painful such conflicts were to him as the one into which he was about to be dragged, that he must, as a faithful minister of Christ, and as a sincere pastor of the Church of England, do his duty. He convened, therefore, at the vicarage, the church-wardens, and a few of the leading and pious Episcopalians, alike distinguished for their per-

sonal religion, and for their love to that Church of which they were members. They examined with great attention all the accounts, revised all the estimates, cut down with an unsparing hand every thing approaching to luxury, confining the proposed expenditure to simple necessities; and then resolved, if these political dissenters should by their conduct force them so to do, to demand a *poll*, and not rest satisfied with the decision of a tumultuous assembly, organized, not for the peaceable discussion of what was best to be done, but for overawing the Church and her friends by clamour and uproar.

At length the day arrived. Although the vestry-meeting was convened for the hour of eleven, by half-past nine the Irish mob, organized at "*The Pewter Pot*," proceeded to the vestry door; and as the parishioners known to be favourable to the rate arrived at the church doors, they were insulted, jostled, or assaulted by these hired ruffians. At a quarter-past ten the church doors were opened. The *ladies* from "*The Cat and Magpie*," the "*Papists*" from "*The Hen and Chickens*," and the lower orders from "*The Rum and Punch-bowl*," occupied different parts of the church, for the purpose of making simulta-

neous cries, when their leaders, Messrs. Stunt, Squibb, Martin, and Sadwork, who were to be stationed in the front seats of the three galleries, should give the previously arranged signals. At eleven o'clock the amiable and excellent vicar entered the church, *and took the chair*. This led to protests, to shrieks, to whistling, and to an attempt to remove him. But though the vicar possessed more of the milk of human kindness in his character, in addition to the yet more important graces of humility and charity, than is ordinarily the case with even the best of men, yet he had that decision which a good man will have when he *knows* he is right, and when he is opposed by the passions of bad and unprincipled enemies. It is but an act of justice to Mr. Griffiths to state, that he was no party to this reception of the vicar, and made many attempts to obtain silence; yet who will say that in sanctioning measures which let loose the passions of the vulgar, uneducated, and unprincipled, he was not as culpable as they? This is always the case with respectable dissenters; they are induced, from some false view, principle, or foible, to commence such a movement as that I am now describing, and afterwards deplore "*the excesses*," as they term

them, of those who, believing their leaders to be in earnest, follow up their plans by acts of violence and illegality.

More than three-quarters of an hour were consumed in fruitless attempts on the part of the insurgents and rebels to frighten, scold, hoot, vote, or persuade the vicar out of the chair. But he remained firm and calm; and when at last their noisy and turbulent leaders perceived that the vicar would *not* yield, they renounced their measures of intimidation, and gave their signals for silence. The vestry clerk then read the notice or requisition calling the meeting, and presented the various estimates and documents which were requisite to demonstrate that the rate was necessary, and that the sum of *one penny* in the pound would be only just adequate to cover the expenditure that was required. As soon as the vestry clerk had terminated his official statement,

The *Vicar* again presented himself to the assembled mob. The leaders in the galleries then gave the agreed signals to their adherents below and around them, for a renewal of the uproar which had taken place at the commencement of the meeting; but in vain did clamour do its worst, for the vicar knew that

he, as the spiritual head of the parish, was entitled to be heard; and he patiently stood till even the hooters became weary of hooting, and he was allowed to commence his address. When silence was once more restored,

The VICAR said, "Fellow parishioners and ladies and gentlemen: I would that I could say children, friends, and fellow disciples and members, but after the scenes which have taken place this morning in this solemn temple of Almighty God, neither my reason nor my charity will permit me thus to designate you. Deeply do I regret to state that although I have officiated during a long period of time in this venerable church, not more than two out of ten of you have, during that period, ever worshipped God within these walls. I never see *you* present who have disturbed by your cries and uproar the business of this day, except on such occasions as the present. Would to God I could believe you to be Christians. Would to God that I could believe you all to be actuated by a love of what you conscientiously believed to be truth. But I cannot do this. If you had required to be satisfied as to the *legality* of *church-rates*, their *utility* and *justice*, or if you had really sought for information as to the necessity for the rate this day required

at your hands, you would have acted far differently. But as some of my fellow parishioners may be present who are in the situation I have described, wishing to do what is right, on the one hand, but yet perplexed by the objections made by the opposers of this measure in their hearing, I will, if allowed by our opponents, address to these conscientious and not clamorous parishioners, a few observations."

(Loud cries of "Hear him! hear him!" were met by vociferations of "Down with him!" "Off, off!" "We've had enough, master vicar!" as well as by hisses and groans.) After this tumult had again lasted ten minutes, during the whole of which time the vicar remained standing quite unmoved by the uproar: the leaders in the gallery once more gave way, and as they cried "*Go on, go on!*" their "touters" in the body of the church, echoed the decision of their acknowledged chieftains.

The VICAR then said, "Fellow parishioners, I am not about to trouble you with a history of *church-rates*. Those who love our church, desire that its edifices should be stable. Those who love her not, but hate her, desire that they should fall into decay. When those edifices were built, the founders gave them to the nation; and they are for ever set apart for

national worship. These churches are *not* private property, as dissenting meeting-houses are, but are the property of the nation. The nation in accepting such glorious inheritances took upon itself the charge of keeping them in repair. This was wise and just ; for, according even to the most ancient and respectable of dissenting authorities themselves, our national establishment has been the means of perpetuating a true faith and godly worship in this our native land. Of our clergy I will say nothing, as I have the honour and happiness of belonging to their number. The Church is established by law, is connected with the State, and is not, therefore, placed on the same footing as dissenting meeting-houses, which are private property, generally yield a large income, and are kept in repair according to the conditions of the leases under which they are held, either by the landlord for an increased, or by the tenant or trustees for a diminished rent. The churches being *national* property, must be kept in repair by the *nation* ; and as in some cases little money is required by a parish for such objects, whilst in others a much larger amount is necessary, it has been ever deemed most equitable and wise that each parish should keep in repair its own church.

If it be wise and good to provide for the support of the army and the navy, although some conscientious Quakers object to all taxes called war-taxes ; and if the dissenters who oppose the church-rates do *not* object to the seizing of the goods of the Quakers for such taxes, why should they object to their goods being seized for a rate to keep in repair the national churches ? In both cases the objects are *national*. In both cases the taxes or rates are made and levied to support them, and yet, whilst I have known *dissenting* brokers and auctioneers concerned in seizing and selling the goods of Quakers for war-taxes, they cry out '*Horrible!*' at the thought of such seizures taking place for the *illegal* refusal to pay a *legal* church-rate.

"There are some persons who pretend that their *consciences* will not allow them to pay church-rates. How happens it that their consciences become all so tender at the same moment ? How happens it, that until some noisy and clamorous man in a parish sets about creating ill-will and confusion amongst neighbours who ought to love and serve each other, by raving against the church-rates, *no conscience* had previously been tender, anxious, or alarmed ? This pretext about *conscience* is too

hollow to need refutation. Suppose a portion of the inhabitants of this country should say, that his Majesty the King, not being a pious man, or her Majesty the Queen, not being a pious woman, or the king's ministers, not being religious men, that their '*consciences*' would not allow them to contribute to the taxes which supply the civil list to the one, and give salaries to the other. What would be said of such a setting up of private opinion and private will against the majesty of the law, and against the legally voted taxes? The answer not only of Churchmen, but of dissenters, would be, 'The law *must* triumph, and the taxes being voted, *must* be paid.' When the inhabitants of a country pay taxes, they do not give a sanction to the *morality* of the tax. That is a matter to be decided on by those who vote the law, and not by those who have merely to obey it, being once voted. And this rule especially applies to countries like Great Britain, governed by constitutional monarchies. The plea of '*conscience*' in this matter, even when made by real dissenters from the Church, is then not available; and how much less so, when made, as I am sorry to say it is in this parish, not merely by dissenters, but by ene-

mies to all religions, as well that of our Church as of the dissenters themselves.

“Then let us look at the *character* of a church-rate. It is *not* a *personal* tax. It is a rent-charge on *property*. Those who have property in a parish have an interest in having a church there, for religion renders property more secure and valuable. Who is there that would assert that property in the midst of a lawless, immoral, and irreligious population, is as valuable as in this parish? (Cries of ‘*Hear! hear!*’) Well, then, fellow parishioners, this tax on property is also a *fair* one, because those who purchased the property, or inherited the property, knew beforehand that this rent-charge or tax must be paid by them. The very fact of the church being there, was a public notice to them that such was the case. Then the church-rate is an *equal* charge. Each pays according to his means and property. Those who have houses only worth £10 per year in this parish will, if this rate be voted, have to pay ten pence to the church, and no more. Then it is a *cheap* tax—and a *rare* tax, for it comes but seldom. And, finally, it is a *frugally expended tax*, for it is only on necessities that it is laid out. To the Churchman it is a

tax which he pays with *pleasure*, for his holiest and best feelings are associated with the church of his fathers. And to the dissenter, when an honest, quiet, peaceable, but still conscientious man, it is one he pays without pain; first, because, after all, the parish church is always dear to men of taste, refinement, and good feeling (I speak of the *building*, and that is all the tax applies to under the head at least of repairs); and, second, because his conscience is not violated by its payment; third, because it is no newly-invented tax, but has ever been levied from time immemorial; fourth, because although he may be an admirer of the *voluntary* principle in religion, still as a godly man he would rather that his fellow parishioners should receive religious instruction at church than nowhere; and he knows, for example, in this parish, that all the dissenting meeting-houses together could not contain more than one-sixth of the population; fifth, because it is a tax, the necessity for which, and the application of which he can examine into and see for himself; and, sixth, because the non-payment or non-voting of church-rates generally would impose on the voluntary principle a thousand times more than it is prepared to effect, *viz.* the establishment

of meeting-houses all over the land, large enough to contain at least as many inhabitants for divine worship as those churches would do which it is proposed to allow to go to ruin.

“But some conscientious dissenters object that the Scriptures say nothing about church-rates; neither do they about quarterly collections at meeting-houses. The Scriptures establish *general principles* on these points, and those general principles may be summed up as follows: first, The gospel is to be preached *every where*; but how can it be preached without temples or places of worship? Second, The temples of God are ordered to be built, and God himself commended those who erected them. Third, The Scriptures show that Christ greatly revered the temple, not only by reading, preaching, and discussing therein, but by turning out those who profaned it by their cries, their worldly dealings, and their other bad conduct. Fourth, St. Paul asserted the right of ministers to be maintained, but of what use to maintain ministers if their temples were to fall into decay in which they were to preach? The religion of Christ is a *reasonable*, as well as an harmonious religion. Ends are not expected without means; and it is reasonable as well as scriptural to make church-rates. But

then the dissenters say that it is *unjust* for *them* to be required to keep a church in repair which they never frequent, in which they never worship.

“This is the very worst, though the most popular, of all the reasons assigned by dissenters. As well might a *blind* man say that he objected to pay the *window-tax*, because light was of no use to him; as well might a dirty man say that he objected to the *paving and cleansing rate*, because he did not require the streets to be paved or cleansed for *him*; as well might a lover of *republican* principles say he objected to *king's-taxes*, because the civil list formed part, and he had an aversion to monarchies; as well might those who live by depredation and other equally dishonourable and immoral modes object to *police taxes*, because the non-existence of a police would to them be an advantage rather than an evil. In all these cases the dissenters, as well as the Churchman, would say, ‘We cannot listen to such nonsense as this; society *must* be maintained, its laws must be respected; and either the laws must be altered and the constitution changed, or these taxes, both in *principle* and in their mode of levying, must be supported.

“There are other dissenters who ask, ‘Are

not Churchmen rich enough to support their own places of worship without asking our aid?' This objection is specious, but baseless. Churchmen have *not* their *own* places of worship. Dissenters have. The churches of the land, are the property of the land. The inhabitants of a parish have a *right* to hear *gratuitously* the gospel preached, and the prayers read all the year round. The dissenting meeting-houses are private property, and the pews may all be let to seat-holders; they are not compelled by law to have free-seats. The Church of England religion is the religion for all the nation; that of dissenters, is the religion of those who separate from the national faith. As the churches of the Church of England are a *national provision* for the use of the whole nation, the individual refusing to avail himself of such a provision does not morally exempt himself thereby from paying. Suppose a certain number of persons, inhabitants of England, say, 'We approve of free trade, therefore we hate the coast-guard; therefore we think it absurd to prevent smuggling, for if free trade should be established there would be no necessity for smuggling or for a coast-guard; and as this service costs a vast deal of money to the nation, we will not pay the government taxes until

this branch of expenditure be rendered unnecessary by the establishment of this free trade we so dearly love.' What would be thought of such people? All wise and moderate men would say, 'Until free trade be established, smuggling must be prevented, and the coast-guard must be maintained.' Now, just apply this to *church-rates*. Some persons say 'we do not want a *national* church.' 'Very well,' say I, 'then let us see if the legislature thinks so, and if it does, let it change our laws and constitution. But in the mean time we *have* a national church, and until it be legally destroyed, as it *has* been legally voted, we must support it. And as this *national* religion must have *national* edifices, we must, of course, keep those edifices from crumbling into ruin by repairing them; and, therefore, we must have *church-rates*.'

"It is said by some, that if church-rates were *only* applied to church repairs, there would not be so much objection to them; but that more than one-half is expended in salaries, in sacramental wine, and in miscellaneous matters, over which the church-payers cannot exercise any specific control. Now, this objection is an absurd one. He who wills the end, wills the means by which the end is to be

accomplished. What would a dissenter say to one of his own body who should object to the produce of a quarterly collection in his meeting-house, being applied to the payment of a clerk, a collector, pew-openers, perhaps a sexton, and other purposes, and should say, 'no—a quarterly collection is for rent, taxes, and repairs, and all the rest should go to the minister?' The answer would be, but we *must* have a clerk, pew-opener, a collector, and so forth, and if you will not allow the receipts from the quarterly collections to be partially appropriated in this manner, we must have a special collection to meet such a necessary outlay. Well, so we say to these objectors to church-rates. The church must be kept up in decency and order. The necessary officers to the church must be remunerated. It must be lighted, cleansed, and supplied with all that is necessary to it as a *national* church in decency and order. Besides which, you who do not come to church *now*, may do so next Sunday, and you have *all* of you *always* the *right* to come here, for it is the *National* Church, and for this reason we ask you for this rate.

“Finally, my fellow parishioners, let me exhort you, one and all, in the name of that Master whose I am, and whom I love and de-

sire to serve, to come more frequently to this church, to aid us by your prayers instead of retarding us by your opposition, and to become one fold, one flock, under one shepherd, but with Jesus Christ himself as the Shepherd of us all."

This speech was listened to with much more attention than could have been expected; and the friends of the Church and of true religion manifested their approbation at its close. But the agitators in the galleries were set to work again:—shouts of "NO CHURCH-RATE!" were vociferated from the distributed gangs:—and in the midst of this tumult, MR. SERJEANT MAYNARD moved that a church-rate of one penny in the pound be voted. JAMES GLOVER, Esq., the wealthiest man in the parish, seconded that resolution; and the vicar was about to put it to the vote, when THOMAS CHILDISH, Esq., rose to bring forward his counter resolution. He appeared, however, much disheartened by the manly, Christian, powerful statement of THE VICAR, and though he did not say as much, he was cold, formal, and lifeless, in his opposition. Still he said something about "*injustice*," "*oppression*," "*equal rights*," as well as "*liberty of conscience*," and concluded a speech of about five minutes long by moving, "*That this vestry, by no means satisfied of the necessity*

for a rate, and convinced that neither the interests of the parish, nor of the Church itself, would be advanced by such a proceeding, refuses to vote any church-rate." This was a *tricky* way of getting rid of the measure, not resting it upon principle, but on a pretended non-necessity for the rate. Mr. Solicitor Wyatt had cunningly drawn up this resolution.

The leading enemies to the rate were by no means pleased, however, at the aspect of affairs; and fearing a defeat at the vestry, so powerful had been the effect produced by the speech of the vicar, that they cried out for "MR. O'REILLY!" The signal-men in the galleries called out "O'REILLY!" the gangs in the church body then roared "O'REILLY!" and at last a small compact man, about five feet eight inches high, with a bald head, a quick eye, a small mouth, and a wide forehead, stepped forward. He was a ROMISH PRIEST! He began by saying,

"That he had listened with great attention to the *studied* and *artful* speech of their *reverend* vicar," (laying particular emphasis on the words printed in italics, in order to excite applause from the mob,) "and that in vain had he endeavoured to find one single argument in it;" (cries of '*Very true*,' from the gallery-

men, which were responded to by the gangs ;) “and therefore, fellow parishioners, the only difficulty I have on this occasion, is to discover something to reply to. Not one fact, not one argument of any value, have I heard from your *reverend* instructor; no, not even so large a one as one grain of wheat in a bushel of chaff. Oh! that I could have found but *one* grain. I should have examined it, turned it about, cut it open, ripped it up, pounded it, pestled it, done all I could with it, and at last perchance have eaten it up! (Loud and vehement laughter mixed with cries of ‘Bravo! *Father O’Reilly.*’) So as our *reverend* instructor has not supplied us in his speech, which is no doubt in perfect harmony with his sermons, with one single argument to turn even a phrase upon, I will, with your permission, give a few reasons against what are called CHURCH-RATES. (Cries of ‘That’s it, Father O’Reilly, hit him hard.’)

“CHURCH-rates are ROBBERY-rates. That’s my FIRST proposition. (*Bravo! bravo!*) No one can drive me from *this* point. They *rob* the Catholics, *rob* the Jews, *rob* the dissenters, *rob* the Presbyterians, *rob* the Methodists, *rob* the Quakers, and *rob all* but the Churchmen. (Shrieks of ‘*Bravo!*’) And even they *rob* more

than half of the persons *called* Churchmen, but who have the good sense *never to go to church*. These were when infants made Churchmen without their consent. ('*Capital!*' cried Mr. Childish. '*Excellent!*' bawled Mr. Patterson.) All are robbed by having to pay church-rates. For of what use is a church to us into which we never go? There's no getting over that! And into which we never *will* go, in spite of all the *hypocritical* invitations of your *reverend* vicar! (Cries of '*Shame!*' from some respectable Churchman, but which cries were drowned by hootings and yells on the part of the cabal. Fellow parishioners, I will tell you a story. ('*Do, Father O'Reilly, do, do tell us a story!*' shouted the men in the gallery.) Once upon a time there was a *barber*, and this barber was a Quaker, and the Quaker's name was Obadiah, and he lived in a town in Nottinghamshire; and there came into this town the new incumbent, as they called him, which means simply a new lazy, indolent, good-for-nothing drain upon the parish: a parson, or rector, called *Mansfield*. And this new drain upon the parish became a very expensive one, for he would have the church repaired, and a lot of other fine things done, and then he obtained a CHURCH-RATE. So at last the collec-

tor went to Obadiah, and asked him for '*his*' church-rate. '*My* church-rate!' exclaimed Obadiah, '*I* have *no church*, friend; so how can I owe a *rate*?' 'It was voted by the vestry,' said the collector. 'Then, friend, let the vestry that voted it pay it.' 'It has been approved of by the new rector, and sanctioned by the magistrates,' said the collector. 'So much the better for thee, and for it, friend, for thou wilt stand a better chance of having thy commission than if the rate was refused by others as it is by me. Tell *thy* rector I shall not pay *his* church-rate.'

"So you see, fellow parishioners, the collector went away with a flea in his ear. (Loud peals of laughter.) Well, what happened next? I will tell you. The collector told all this to his *reverend* rector, who was very angry with Obadiah, and said he would call on him, and settle the matter. So down went the rector, and called on Obadiah. 'How do ye do, Mr. Obadiah?' asked the rector. 'Thou art very obliging,' replied Obadiah, 'as well as *thy* church-rate will let me be.' '*My* church-rate!' replied the rector, 'it is the *parish church-rate*, and you must pay it.' '*Why* must *I* pay it?' asked Obadiah. 'Because the church needs repairs.' 'Then let those who go to

church pay for the repairing it.' 'But do not *you* go to church?' asked the rector. 'No, to be sure I don't,' replied the barber.' 'But that is *your* fault,' replied the rector; 'the church *doors* are open to *all*—the church *pews* are *free* to *all*—the sacraments are administered to *all* who are willing, as Christians, to receive them; and if you do not enjoy the benefit of *all* these, it is at once your loss, and your fault. This negligence on your part supplies no reason for refusing to pay the church-rate.' Obadiah replied that the church was not *his* way of thinking; and that he was not in the habit of paying for that from which he derived no benefit.' And with this answer the parson went away; but scarcely had he got home than he received a bill enclosed in half a sheet of paper from Obadiah, worded as follows:—

“ Friend Mansfield,

Dr. to Obadiah, the barber.

For 50 shavings, by Obadiah, at	} 4s. 2d.
one penny each shaving . . .	

“ Obadiah hopes his friend Mansfield will pay him these four shillings and twopence to-day, to enable him to pay the church-rate.”—(Loud laughter on all sides.)

“ When the rector opened this document,

and read it, he exclaimed, 'What can Obadiah mean by this? He has never shaved me once during the six months I have been rector; what can he mean by charging me for fifty shavings?' And the rector resolved to have the matter cleared up without delay. So down he went to Obadiah, and found him still in his shop.

" 'Friend Obadiah,' said the rector, 'I have just received this paper from you; there must be some mistake. You know you have never shaved me once in your life, and yet you send me in a bill for fifty shavings, and ask me to pay at once these four shillings and twopence, to enable you to pay your *church-rate*, which, strange to say, comes exactly to that sum.'

" 'Friend Mansfield,' replied Obadiah, 'if I have not shaved thee fifty times, it is no fault of mine: the hot water bath always been ready; the soap-dish always supplied with soap; a towel, clean, for thy chin; and razors of the best make and sharpness, to shave thy beard. If, then, thou hast not had thy beard shaven fifty times, it is no fault of mine; it is thy fault. Thou must pay me my bill.'

" 'What!' asked the rector, indignantly, 'pay you for what you have not done? It is

enough for me to pay for what I receive and enjoy, and not for what I do not !’

“ ‘ Then, friend Mansfield, I cannot pay *thy* church-rate, if thou wilt not pay me for shaving thee. Thou didst tell me, just now, that I must pay the church-rate because it was my own fault I did not go to church, and hear thee read, sing, and pray ; and so now I tell thee it is *thy* fault if thou hast not been shaved ; and thou must pay me.’ ”

“ And then, as the story goes, the rector said that Obadiah was a very witty fellow ; though his argument was not worth a straw, since he, Obadiah, did nothing ; whereas he, the rector, had performed the services to all present : but in consideration of his wit, he would that time pay the church-rate for him. (Loud laughter, and cries of ‘ Well done, Obadiah.’)

“ And well done the rector too, say I,” continued Father O’Reilly ; “ and let’s hope our vicar will imitate his example, and pay *our* church-rates for *us* ! At any rate, *we* will not. So now join me in shouting, three times, *Down with the Church !* and *Down with the church-rates !* ”

Loud shouts were then raised by the men in the gallery, and responded to by the gangs

below, of "*Down with the Church!!*" "*Down with the church-rates!!*"

After the cheering, shouts, and laughter, which succeeded this *cunning* speech of Father O'Reilly, had somewhat ceased, the dissenters and their coadjutors called "VOTE! VOTE!!" In vain did the vicar attempt to be heard in reply to the Romish priest, and to demonstrate the hollow fallacies of the amusing but jesuitical anecdote of Father O'Reilly, than which nothing could have been more easy, since the rate was a public tax, raised for the benefit of all; whereas the barber's claim was an illegal and absurd demand, made for the benefit of only himself. In vain, also, did some friends of the Church appeal to the "*candour* of the dissenters." Not another word could be heard; and the dissenters claimed that their resolution, being an *amendment*, should be put first. And so it was; but the confusion was so great, and the jumping up and sitting down so incessant, that the vicar was really unable to say, with any thing like precision, whether the majority was *for* or *against* the amendment. He therefore consulted the churchwardens, vestry clerk, and others about him, and a new show of hands took place. The second time it was clear that

the majority was *against* the amendment; and the vicar so declared it. This decision was followed by such screams, hootings, hisses, and yells, on the part of the mob and faction, and it was so clear that a poll was unavoidable, that the vicar withdrew, and the poll was fixed to take place the next and the two following days.

It is unnecessary for me to go further into the details of the poll, except to record that nearly all the *worth* was on one side, and all the *villainy* on the other; nearly all the *wealth* on one side, and all the *vagabonds* on the other; and nearly all the *science, talent, industry, sense, and virtue* on one side, and all the *Jesuits, Jews, and rabble* on the other. Some of the supporters of the rate were insulted, many roughly handled, and the respectable *female* parishioners, who, as widows or single ladies, had the right of voting in their own names, were intimidated. Yet, I am happy to record, that in spite of all this, of false votes, riots, and every imaginable trick, there were, when the poll was closed,

For the Rate	2401
Against the Rate	1960
Majority for the Rate	441

Such a result ought to have satisfied the dissenters that their cause was a bad one. But instead of this being the case, they met several times at "*The Hen and Chickens*" (for Mr. Griffiths, to his credit, abandoned the matter when he saw the sort of parties with whom he must associate if he went on, and therefore had no more meetings held at his house), and finally formed themselves into a "*permanent*" committee, to oppose *all* church-rates, and even to resist the payment after they were voted.

From this period I date my serious convictions against dissent; and thenceforth I resolved to study with attention and diligence the whole of the questions on which dissenters professed to separate from the Church. The church-rate affair had shown me that *modern* political dissenters were *without principle* when any question was at issue relative to the Church; that they were religionists without a religion; that they were separatists, merely negating Episcopacy, and not a body of men capable of providing a religion for a vast and powerful nation; that they were able *destructives*, but hopeless *constructors*; that by noise, clamour, organization, and union, they could *overthrow*; but that when they had carried their object

into effect, they would be unable to construct on the ruins of the edifices they destroyed, any other temple to the glory of God, or for the benefit of their fellow men. Of course, I observed that *all* dissenters were *not* violent, destructive, or revolutionary; but still the great question which presented itself to my mind was, "what is the character of the *principle* of dissenterism?" For upwards of a year, I read on both sides of the question, I devoted all my spare hours to this vast subject. Mr. Griffiths's library supplied me with all the books on *one* side of the subject, and our excellent vicar, to whom I was introduced by his curate, with whom I became acquainted through meeting him frequently at the house of an Episcopal friend of my father's, was good enough to put at my disposal his large and valuable collection of theology, Church history, and controversy. Mrs. Griffiths saw my tendencies with regret, not to say anguish, and wrote to my father and mother on the subject; but as her accounts of my moral character and religious habits were not calculated to excite any anxiety, my parents allowed me to pursue my investigations, simply "entreating me not to study too hard, and not to neglect either my health or profession." As I proceeded in the investigation, my mind

became more convinced and decided; but as I had learnt from my parents, and from dear aunt Mary, as well as from himself, the history of my grandfather, I was resolved not to be in any hurry to change the religion in which I had been educated.

Sophia Griffiths, during the five years I passed at her father's, was no *nominal* dissenter. Her parents and school-mistress had taken vast pains to instruct her in what they called the *principles* of dissent, but which ought to have been designated its *tenets*; and the following conversation which we had in the presence of her mother, when I had attained my nineteenth year, will show, that though her education had given an unfortunate bias to her views, she did *not* resemble the dissenting youth of 1841, but could defend her system with talent, if not with success. Of course her mother, who was the umpire, decided in favour of her daughter, and occasionally assisted her in the progress of our discussion; but though she was pronounced to be the victor, she has since admitted that, from that moment, she began to doubt as to the *principles* of dissent.

It was on a fine summer afternoon in the month of July, when enjoying, as much as such small gardens as even the best parts of

the metropolis supply *can* be enjoyed, but still on a by no means contemptible grass-plot, and with flowers and plants around us, which were the more valuable from their very brief existence in a London atmosphere, that Sophia, in her most witching tone of rallying, said,

“Well, now, George Rawston, as you are always teasing me about my *dissenterism*, as you very impertinently style my attachment to the nonconformist churches, let us have a fair fight out this afternoon, and mamma shall be the umpire.”

“With all my heart, Miss Sophia,” I replied; “and though I am quite aware of your mamma’s prejudices, I adopt her as umpire on one condition, and that is, that she has *not* to decide between the Church of England and dissent, for then I know I should lose, so strong are her opinions on this subject, but simply as to the superiority of the arguments made use of by you and by myself in support of our respective systems.”

“*Agreed to,*” said Sophia. “*Agreed to,*” said Mrs. Griffiths; and, after chairs had been adjusted, cotton-boxes arranged, and work, at least, looked out *to be* done during our threatened controversy, the question at

issue was agreed to be, "*Whether the Church of England or dissent was most entitled to our support?*"

The *first* point to be decided was, who should begin? This was rather a knotty question, and gave rise to mutual demands and protests; but Mrs. Griffiths decided that I should commence by asking her daughter "WHY SHE WAS A DISSENTER?" Her mother said that she preferred this mode, because it would put me to the necessity of pointing out *why* her daughter's dissent was ill founded, should I think it to be so, at the same time that it would enable herself to judge of whether Sophia was well grounded "*in the faith once delivered to the saints;*" for Mrs. Griffiths, like other dissenters, will date *Independency*, not from the time of Mr. Brown, but from that of the apostles.

"Well, then, Miss Sophia," I asked, "WHY ARE YOU A DISSENTER?"

"I am a dissenter because *the fundamental principle on which dissenters build their system is, 'that Jesus Christ is the sole Head of the church.'* Legislative authority in religion only belongs to *Him*. In the exercise of this authority, some things he has revealed, others commanded, and others forbidden. These we

are to receive, obey, and avoid. Other things he has left indifferent, and these we may leave so too. No one has a right to reject, add to, or alter these laws of the Head of the Christian church; since it is not to be supposed that Christ would give authority either to civil or ecclesiastical governors to undo what he has done, or to contradict what his wisdom has enjoined. Now as, in my opinion, the Church of England has rejected, altered, and added to, in its hierarchy, discipline, and worship, and, above all, by its connection with the State, to the laws of Christ for governing his church, I am a dissenter. This is my FIRST reason. Answer this first, Mr. George Rawston."

"Very well, indeed, Sophia," said her delighted mother; "come, Mr. George, now for your reply."

"Your *first* objection, Miss Sophia," I replied, "if carried out fully, amounts to this, that religion is to find its way to the hearts of all men, and be made known to all the earth, without human agency, or human activity. And yet the dissenters aid in printing the Bible and distributing it. But where is the command to be found in the Holy Scriptures to print and circulate Bibles? There is but one laudatory passage in favour even of reading it;

and yet both of us read it, and desire its extensive distribution. Now, then, do you call *this* a matter 'which Christ has left *indifferent*,' and that we may therefore do, or not do, at our pleasure?"

Sophia smiled, and said, "No; but the circulation of the Scriptures came within the *spirit* of the command to *preach the gospel*."

"It does so," I said, "but only within the *spirit*, for at that time the Scriptures were not collected; there were no means of distribution; and preaching was rather a substitute for printing than its coadjutor. Now, as you cannot say, that though Christ never commanded that the Holy Scriptures should be translated into every language and printed and circulated all over the world, *therefore* it is *not* our duty to do all this; neither can you maintain, by any thing like fair and substantial arguments, that a government of a country does more than it ought to do when it provides a religion for the lower orders."

"*Lower orders*," interrupted Mrs. Griffiths, "what do you mean, George, by '*lower orders*'?"

"Oh! I will say the uneducated classes of society, if you prefer that term, Mrs. Griffiths; for I simply mean that portion of the inhabi-

tants of a Christian country, who, from their want of leisure, education, and disposition, would never choose a religion for themselves. Now, whilst I may respect the mistaken sentiments of those pious dissenters, who from a fear that man should usurp the province of God, would object to governments establishing a State, or a national religion, yet their objection in reality amounts to this, that as God is the Head of his church, there should be no officers, no teachers, no protectors of that church, but that all should be left to Him, as well for time as for eternity. But this was not Christ's way of thinking or acting when upon earth, and though he never said that in Great Britain the Church of England should be established on such a model, he confided to the apostles the power and duty of establishing the first churches, and promised his Spirit to direct and bless them."

"Yes," said Sophia, "but those *first* churches were not connected with the State."

"I do not say they were," I replied, "since I am only now showing that God in establishing a true faith did not despise human agency, but that he left it to men, both in their individual and collective capacities, to assist in the spread of the Christian religion; and that as

dissenters call on governments to protect all sects and opinions, thereby causing them to *act* in religious matters, so Episcopalians call them to act, by providing a religion for the lower orders. The dissenters are in this inconsistent, for they call on the government to *protect* all religions, which is, in fact, to act in religious matters; and yet they object to the government acting in favour of Episcopacy, *i. e.* the *national* faith."

"But still, George, you must admit that it is one thing to protect existing sects, and another thing to establish a new one."

"Certainly, Miss Sophia," I replied, "and it is one thing, to do as the government of Great Britain is called to do by Churchmen, to support and protect a church which has existed for ages; and another thing to consent, as the dissenters ask it to do, to abandon that church after centuries of existence, and extend to new, and in some cases even injurious sects, the same protection it formerly gave to the old faith of the country. The question is, is there any thing in the Bible opposed to the connection of the government of a country with '*a*' religion? I challenge you to show me such a passage. The whole history of the children of Israel, and then that of the Jewish people

generally, is in direct opposition to your objection to the Church of England. Amongst both the children of Israel and the Jews generally, the governments were religious, as well as civil, and when our Saviour declared that *His* religion was not of this world, he did not mean to say that the governments and institutions of this world were to be *separated* from religion. If it be important to a family, that its head should be a Christian, that the laws of its internal regulation should be moral and virtuous, and that throughout all its machinery there should be a regular action of Christian influence, much more is it necessary in a state, that its constitution, laws, and institutions should all be Christian; and how can this be effected without connecting the State with religion; and how can it be so connected without the agency of some visible church? A machinery is not the less essential upon earth, that the impellent force which guides and animates its movements, is from heaven. A Christian government, after having placed in the varied parishes of a country its Christian churches, does not the less look for that blessing from above, without which the country would remain as hopeless and lifeless as before. And a Christian government that should with-

draw from any one of these churches so established the smallest fraction of its accustomed and long-bestowed aid, would merit, as it would receive, the chastisement of God. ‘The candlestick would be removed out of its place.’”

“But if it be so important for governments to establish and protect churches,” asked Sophia, “how comes it to pass that there is not to be found in the New Testament any distinct command on the subject?”

“This is one of those things,” I replied, “that God left to the agency of man, and to the operation of the Christian religion on the hearts of Christian states and governments; and as well may I ask of you to find me in the New Testament your *Independent* mode of worship and discipline, as you can ask me for Scripture enactments as to the duty of Christian governments. But inasmuch as the word of God contains positive injunctions to all men to love God, and worship and honour him, so, inasmuch as the members of government and of legislatures are not the less private individuals for being public members of political society, they are called upon by those injunctions, both in their private and corporate capacities, to seek to establish his worship, and secure his honour and glory.”

“But you are proceeding on the fallacy, Mr. George,” said Sophia, “that the Church of England is only a *spiritual* church, and has only *spiritual* objects to promote; whereas, by its connection with the State, it is a temporal rather than a spiritual one.”

“This is a grave error on your part, Miss Sophia; the Church of England is a *spiritual* church, but, of course, its machinery cannot be wholly so. As with dissenters, there are pew-rents, quarterly collections, an annual collection for the preacher; deacons who look after the temporal affairs, and trustees who take care of the buildings and the burying-ground; so there is a machinery in the Church of England, of course much more extensive and important, from the circumstance of the greatly larger amount of disciples or members who belong to it, than to all the separatists combined, but the object in both cases is, or professes to be, the same—the spiritual improvement of the people.”

“Well, now,” said Sophia, “we have had enough of my FIRST objection. Let me proceed to the SECOND.”

“By all means—pray state it.”

“It is this, **THAT THE SACRED SCRIPTURES ARE THE ONLY RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE.**

We dissenters refuse to be bound by the Creed of the Council of Nice, by the Decrees of the Council of Trent, or by the Articles of the Church of England. We say, ‘*The Bible and the Bible alone is the religion of the Protestant Dissenters.*’”

“Pardon me, Miss Griffiths, you say so no more than does a Churchman; for what did you dissenters do with the *confession of faith and catechism of the Assembly of Divines which met at Westminster*? Did you not adopt them? And is not that *catechism* now in use amongst dissenters, as the Church catechism is among Churchmen? The Episcopalians say, and mean too, as much as you do, ‘*The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible,*’ that is, nothing contrary to the letter or the spirit of the Bible; and the sixth Article of Religion of the Church is as clear as the light from heaven on this point, as also is the *thirty-fourth Article* respecting *traditions*. Dissenters have their *Westminster faith*, Churchmen have their creeds and articles; and when you say you refuse to be bound by the creeds of the Church, you cannot say you refuse to be bound by the tenets and doctrines announced in your own dissenting authorized publications.”

“But then, Mr. George,” said Sophia, “we

examine our catechism and books of primitive instruction with God's word, and only receive and believe them provided they agree with the Holy Scriptures."

"Nor," I replied, "do the Episcopalians act otherwise. *Their* creeds, *their* catechism, *their* articles, they examine with the Holy Scriptures, and only receive them because they are in harmony with the word of God. Remember this also, that whereas the Churchman can point to the history of his church, from the time of the apostles downwards, the dissenters have no higher authority than one Mr. Brown who lived in the sixteenth century."

"Oh, you are always teasing me about Mr. Brown," said Sophia, laughingly, "I tell you the dissenting system was the system of the apostles."

"Indeed," I replied; "I beseech you to prove it. And to enable you to do so, let me ask you a few questions. First, *Where* is it said in the Holy Scriptures, that governments should be *without* religion, and nations *without* a *national* faith?"

Sophia said, "she could not remember any text to that effect."

"*Second.* Where is it said, that the governments of Christian nations are *not* to provide

Temples, in which the Lord of Heaven and Earth is to be worshipped."

Sophia, "admitted that she was disposed to approve of places of worship being supplied by the State, but then she thought that it ought to be, as in France, all religions paid, and all churches kept in order, never mind what religion, by the government."

I replied, that the effect of this would be to make England as atheistical or infidel as France; and that to sanction *all* religions and support the clergy and temples of all, would be as bad, nay worse, than not to support any.

Then, *third*, I asked Miss Sophia, "where is it said, that when Christian governments and Christian people have prepared and founded churches for divine worship, persons calling themselves Christians should separate from them, and not only separate from them, but oppose those who frequent them, and not only oppose them, but seek by every means in their power to put down the clergy and destroy the churches? Show me your texts of Scripture in favour of this line of conduct, Miss Sophia."

Miss Sophia said, "she could not cite any particular texts, certainly, but that such conduct must be justified under the general duty

of Christians *to come out from amongst them*, that is, not to belong to error, but oppose it."

"You being the judge, I suppose, Miss Sophia?"

"Oh yes, for else of what use is my judgment?"

"We will see about that presently," I replied. "Let me first continue my questions as to dissent."

"*Fourth.* Where do you find the Bible establishes the *voluntary* principle in religious matters? Where does it confer on men the right of establishing what sort of religion they think fit? Where does it prohibit *national* churches? Where does it denounce religious kings and governments? Where does it say, that God disapproves of a *nation*, as a *nation*, professing his name, or objects to the inhabitants proceeding to parish churches, every Lord's day to hallow it? Where does that same Bible, to which you say the dissenters *alone* appeal, sanction multiplied forms of worship, multiplied confessions of faith, multiplied views as to the sacraments, and multiplied modes of their administration? Then where does the Bible authorize the never-ceasing conflicts, first of one dissenting sect with another, and then of the members of each sect with

each other, and with their ministers and deacons? Then where do you find a text of Scripture to authorize your opposition to *tithes*, to *church-rates*, to the parochial *clergy*, to the bishops, to an hierarchy founded on the word of God? And in what chapter do you discover *your* form of worship, *your little attention to the public reading of God's word*, *your* almost exclusive attention to *preaching*, and *your* short and extemporaneous *prayers*? Where do you find *your* system of excluding all from the communion table until they shall have given an account of what is called their Christian experience to the minister or deacon, and members? What text, mention one, in favour of any of these things? You cannot do so, and yet you pretend that the dissenters only build their system on the Bible. No, they have their traditions which are not scriptural; whilst the Church has its creeds and ordinances, which are so."

"I cannot find you *texts* for all these things," said Sophia, "but then the *general* spirit of the Bible is in favour of most of them."

"I will give you three months to find your texts in," I replied; and she accepted the offer, but not one text was ever produced.

"Now then, George," she said, "let us get

to *another* of my reasons for being a dissenter, it is this, THAT DISSENTERS CLAIM THE RIGHT OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT IN ALL MATTERS OF RELIGION. Dissenters will not take the priest as their judge—for then, what priest should they choose? nor the supreme magistrate and legislature: for one would decide one way, and another in an opposite manner. Every one has a right to make a *public* profession of that religion which his *private judgment* dictates to be from God.”

“This question of the *right of private judgment in all matters of religion*,” I replied, “is one of great importance, but has been burthened with many strange errors. To deny a *qualified* right of *private judgment* would be to fall into the errors of Popery. To admit an *unqualified* right would be to fall into the heresies of Latitudinarianism. The Church of England appears to me to steer the middle course. No mental slavery on the one hand, and no licentiousness of freedom of opinion on the other. It does not set up either priest, king, or government as infallible; but it respects the wisdom of ages, and loves to draw water out of those deep wells of the pure water of life which the apostles and founders of Christianity dug for the benefit of all posterity.”

“But *then*,” said Sophia, “all the affairs of the church were managed by *spiritual* men. Is this the case now with the Church of England?”

“And allow me to ask,” I replied, “as you maintain that this is not the case in the Church of England, is it so among dissenters? Look at the case of Martin, the baker, who is one of the deacons of the Particular Baptist congregation in — Street, and who was the other day fined, for the fifth time, for selling bread of light weight to the poor. Look at the case of Simmonds, who was one of the elders of the English Burghers assembling at — Row, and was prosecuted for breach of promise of marriage. I could go on with twenty such cases, as you know. Well, are all these men *spiritual* men, Miss Griffiths?”

“No, no,” she replied, “but the best of human institutions must have their imperfections, from the mere fact that they *are* human.”

“Precisely so, Miss Sophia, and if you will only apply this rule to the constitution, discipline, and worship of the Church of England, you will be constrained to admit, that though it is not perfect, this Church is the most perfect of any now existing on the face of the

earth. By the mere efflux of time, as well as through the frailty and wickedness of man, errors will creep into it; but take it as a whole, I will now confess, what I have never said so strongly before, that I think her the most perfect Church in Christendom."

"But," said Sophia, "if you come to discuss the merits of the Church of England, I say that I dissent from it, first, because it has an earthly head; the King or Queen."

"*Temporal* head, Miss Sophia, but not spiritual."

Sophia. Second, its forms of prayer cannot be altered without the consent of this temporal head.

Myself. Because errors might otherwise be introduced by some one or more heterodox clergymen, who might creep into the Church and do great injury to the souls of men. This is a Christian conservative precaution in favour of truth and orthodoxy.

Sophia. But more grave matters are brought before *Parliament*.

Myself. Because the nation has adopted Episcopacy as its faith; and as the churches belong to the nation, the nation, by and through its representatives, regulate the Church, but not any matter of faith and doctrine.

Sophia. Then the Church ought not to have the power to decree rites and ceremonies.

Myself. Why not? the Church is *spiritual*, and its authorized and evangelical clergy are its spiritual secondary chiefs after Christ, the one great Spiritual Head of the whole Church.

Sophia. Then dissenters object to the multiplicity of offices and dignities among the clergy. There are not only bishops and deacons and presbyters, but archbishops, deans, archdeacons, &c., &c.

Myself. But where are *your* bishops? Who are the *dissenting bishops*? Did Christ's apostles establish *them*, or not? Where are they among dissenters? Not to be found. And well it is they are not, for you would then have Arian bishops, and Socinian bishops, and Joanna Southcott bishops, and a thousand other sorts. As to the various officers of the Church, they are all necessary, all have distinct duties to perform, and none interfere with the other. Some are lay, some clerical, some both, but all are necessary to the order, regularity, and decency of the Church.

Sophia. Then dissenters object to a Liturgy, or constant stated form of prayer.

Myself. Preferring the tautology, want of consistency, contradictions, omissions, false

doctrines, diversified opinions, and sometimes even the absolute nonsense of dissenting extemporaneous prayers, I suppose.

Sophia. Then dissenters object to the mode of reading the Psalms by the people, repeating one verse after the clergyman has uttered the preceding one.

Myself. Preferring, I suppose, the dissenting plan of not reading the Psalms at all, or only occasionally *one*, confining the reading of the word of God in public to one chapter or one psalm. Thus imitating the Romish Church, and making the Bible little more than a textbook. How different was this to the conduct of Christ and his apostles, who read and expounded the Scriptures.

Sophia. Then dissenters object to the *length* of the Church prayers.

Myself. Preferring, I suppose, to hear the word of man, and the preacher's exposition of what he (a fallible being) thinks to be truth, to hearing the word of God, and praying *for* all sorts of *good* and *against* all sorts of *evil*, as well as for all sorts of persons, states, and conditions, and returning thanks for all sorts of mercies. The dissenter gives to God one-fourth of his public service, and to man three-fourths. The Church gives the three-fourths to God,

and the one-fourth to man ; at the same time receiving, with respect and gratitude, devotion and love, the preaching and exhortations of the authorized, educated, and evangelical clergy.

Sophia. Then the dissenters object to the creeds of the Church.

Myself. Preferring, I suppose, to have no creed, to make no confession of faith whatever, as is their custom ; never to read in the ears of the congregation the moral law ; seldom even to repeat the Lord's prayer, and hardly ever at the evening service ; but relying entirely on their own private judgment, instead of on the example and practice of the primitive churches.

Sophia. Then the dissenters object to *confirmation*.

Myself. Preferring, I suppose, the conduct of my beloved parents to myself, neither christening nor confirming me, but allowing me to exercise this wonderful private judgment of mine in matters of religion. Dissenters never call on their children to make any public profession of faith.

Sophia. Oh, yes, when they become members.

Myself. That is not public, but private to a

deacon and a minister, and to a few persons called together in the vestry.

Sophia. Then dissenters object to the Sick and Burial services as well as to the Baptismal and Confirmation services.

Myself. Preferring, I suppose, no services at all, as with the new sect called "*The Separatists*," who throw into the graves their children and friends without a prayer, a psalm, a chapter of the Bible, or even an exhortation.

Sophia. Then dissenters object to the sign of the cross in baptism, and to kneeling at the reception of the Lord's supper.

Myself. Preferring, I suppose, the French system of making Christian baptism simply voluntary, and rendering it a mere civil act of registration; and receiving the sacrament with their hats on, or setting down, as formerly did *some* Anabaptists.

Sophia. Then dissenters object to *excommunication*.

Myself. Preferring, I suppose, the kind of proceeding adopted by the Independents in my native town, about which I have conversed with you often, when George Palmer and his associates were expelled by *ballot*, and made riots and disturbances, law and chancery suits for years.

Sophia. Then the dissenters object to *ordination* “*by piecemeal*.”

Myself. Preferring, I suppose, the wholly unauthorized mode of the Independents and Baptists.

Sophia. Then dissenters object to clergymen being ordained away from the people, amongst whom they are to labour.

Myself. Preferring, I suppose, the wisdom of their founder, Mr. Brown, to the positive example of the apostles.

Sophia. And, finally, dissenters object to the severity and sternness of the Church of England, admitting of no deviations from established rules.

Myself. Preferring, I suppose, the *laxity* of some dissenting churches, the irregularity of others, and the diversity of all. If these are your *only* objections, Miss Griffiths, to the Church of England, let me beg you to reconsider them all, and on some future occasion it may be that we may review the whole subject.

“With all my heart,” said Sophia; “such discussions are very interesting. But now, mamma (turning to Mrs. Griffiths), who is the conqueror?”

Mrs. Griffiths replied that, in *her* opinion,

Sophia was the victor, though she had no hesitation to admit that Mr. George had defended with much more talent than she had expected the Church of England.

Sophia professed to be delighted with her mother's decision, but she was not internally satisfied. The only serious and invincible objection she had to the Church of England, and on which she remained a long while most decided, was founded on her aversion to Church establishments. If in those days "*The Lectures on National Churches, by the Rev. Dr. Chalmers,*" and "*The Lectures on the Church of England, by the Rev. Hugh M'Neile,*" had been delivered and printed (which was not the case), her objections would have been sooner removed, and many months of careful examination would have been avoided. No two men, in modern times, have rendered such signal services to the Church of England as have the learned and pious authors of the publications I have just referred to. Cheap editions of these treatises should be placed in every cottage throughout the kingdom. Let the clergy of all our parishes look to this, for the people only want *information*. They have a personal as well as hereditary leaning to the Church, and if they have been drawn away

from it, it is because they are imposed upon by false statements, allured by false promises, or excited by vehement and unchristian declamation. Oh, that every cottage in the kingdom possessed these two manuals of Church truth, and that every cottager also could read them! If such were the case, the dissenterism of 1841 would in vain seek to make new proselytes. Its inefficiency as a *national* system would be discovered and appreciated by all, and there would be a mighty and irresistible movement in favour of that Church from which all have derived so much of good, and yet to whom none, no, not even her own sons, are, or can ever be adequately grateful.

As during my residence under the roof of Mr. Griffiths, and in the course of my visits to Mr. Wyatt, I had abundant opportunities afforded me for observing all that passed amongst the modern dissenters, as well as all the defects (some admitted by themselves) of their multiplied systems, I discovered, by degrees, that there was *no spiritual* union amongst them, for that on *spiritual* subjects they adopted but one authority, and that was the private judgment of each individual member. Thus their controversies were endless. In 1809, they were occupied with the controversy of Dr.

Williams, as to the modifications of the Calvinistic system, and in debating the *equity of sovereignty*. Hard names, injurious epithets, unchristian surmises, were resorted to on both sides, and Dr. Williams regretted he had been the occasion of so much ill-blood, and of so many unkind paragraphs. In 1808, and during several following years, the Wesleyans were attacked by anonymous and other dissenting writers, for not preaching *evangelically*. Then followed attacks on Calvinism, and its defence; attacks on Dr. Adam Clarke, and his defence; attacks on Mr. Burder, and his defence; attacks on the Arminians, and their defence; then comparisons between Arminianism and Calvinism, most of which were written in terms of bitter and wrangling controversialists. In 1809, there was a long and vehement quarrel among the dissenters as to the *Female Penitentiary*; and from 1810 to 1815, unceasing pamphlets on the *Socinian* controversy, in the course of which a sort of *orthodox thermometer* was erected among dissenters, by the hieroglyphics on which (only understandable by themselves) their various preachers were to be tried as to the altitude of their orthodoxy, instead of having but one standard to decide by, as is the case in the Church of England,

viz. the *word of God*. The controversy on dissent was renewed in 1815, and from 1819 to 1829, publication after publication appeared, in which the Church of England was attacked on smaller points, till, in the latter year, modern dissenters proclaimed aloud, that their object was to obtain the SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE. The Independents and the Baptists were ever and anon writing pamphlets and treatises on infant and adult baptism, as well as on affusion and immersion, in many of which the most unkind and irritating attacks were made on their fellow Christians. Then came controversies on the *terms of communion*, and on a variety of secondary objects, in which man was always most prominent, and faction and party interests were consulted in preference to truth and *practical* piety.

Nor could I fail of observing, that in proportion as *private judgment* was increasingly claimed by every "*new light*," *i. e.* by every *voluntary* teacher of the *voluntary* principle, so new sects sprung up with mushroom abundance. In addition to the old heresies of Arians, Socinians, Antinomians, Swedenborgians, and the Universalists, there arose the Jumpers, the Southcottians, the Irvingites, and the Ranters; and in addition to the old dissenting sects of

the Independents, the Seceders (not the Presbyterian Church of Scotland), Baptists, Quakers, Calvinistic Methodists, Moravians, and Sandemanians, there sprung up the Scotch Baptists, Scotch Independents, the Brethren called *Catholic not Roman*, and the Evangelical Quakers. I saw, besides all these, the Millenarians, the Johnsonians, the Huntingtonians, the Hutchinsonians, the Sabbatarians, in addition to the followers of some half-dozen men in different counties of England, each one calling his blind and ignorant, and in some cases depraved, followers, after his own name.

These were *some* of the *practical* results of that *voluntary* system, without a head, without authority, without a hierarchy, without a past history, antecedents, or apostolical origin; without union, connection with the State, or restraint imposed by any laws or usages, which I was called on to admire, but from which at last my reason and soul alike revolted.

When I cast my eyes over the *external* state of modern dissenters, in their relation to the government of the country, I found that as members of political associations they uniformly supported measures of agitation, invariably espoused all schemes of radical changes, ever withheld their support from all conservative

administrations, and gave a sort of negative support to governments less conservative, on condition that those governments listened to all their demands, and sought to assist them in obtaining the accomplishment of all their wishes. If I looked to their numbers and rank, I found that they increased amongst the half-informed, the uncertain, and the least respected ; and that (with of course many exceptions) they neither belonged to the rank, fortune, learning, talent, or high and virtuous men of moral society, or the distinguished Christians of the empire. I saw indeed, that, to deceive the unthinking portion of the public, they published absurd statistics, instituting a comparison between the accommodation afforded by the national churches of the country to the population, and those so afforded by their own meeting-houses, basing these erroneous statistics *not* on the number of *seats* in each place of worship, but simply on the number of *places* of assembling. I saw that, as dissenting meeting-houses augmented, their ministers were badly paid ; that there was not, amongst the whole mass of separatists from the Church, money enough to found or support adequate accommodation or adequate pay to the preachers, for even one-tenth of the nation ;

and that although there might have been an augmentation of sects, old meeting-houses were deserted, others sold or pulled down, a great many little dissenting places of worship erected in which the ministers seldom preached to a greater congregation than from one to two hundred, augmented indeed of a Sunday evening by some *irregular Churchmen*, who even preferred a dissenting chapel to remaining at home. I learnt, that where in a country town the Baptist minister was the most eloquent, he drew away from the congregation of his "Independent brother," who found his church fall off, and his salary diminished, and "*vice versâ*;" but that taking the whole mass of dissenters together, and adding up all who were not Episcopalians (I except the Wesleyan Methodists), whether heterodox or orthodox, that they had *not augmented in their total* more than must be expected from the constant increase of the population of the country.

I found that their ministers (with the exception of about one hundred) were *badly paid*; that they received a very inadequate instruction in their "colleges" or seminaries; that they were so poor as to be unable to possess such libraries of sterling theology as are essential to all public religious instructors; that vast

numbers in the agricultural and poorer districts were obliged to resort to other means for procuring a living for themselves, wives, and families; that when they died their widows and children were often most destitute; that if they quarrelled with their churches or congregations they were often left without means of support; that the sacred office of a minister of the gospel was not held in veneration amongst them; that the widows of dissenting ministers who had passed forty or fifty years in the service of dissenting congregations, were not allowed in their old age any sort of pension or income by the members; and that this *voluntary* principle in its practical operation as to individuals was *shabby and mean*.

I learnt that the ministers of *large* congregations were neglectful of the sick, inattentive to the poor members, seldom, if ever, catechised the children, whether poor or rich, of their meeting-houses; rarely exhorted parents to bring their children to baptism, and never invited the mass of the people to receive the Lord's Supper. I perceived that the system pursued by them of admission to what is called *Church membership*, excluded multitudes of godly disposed persons from approaching that sacrament; that they had no ordinance bearing

the least resemblance to *confirmation*; that there was no regular discipline for the members, either aged or juvenile; that by constant changes of the pastors of the congregations, seldom did a minister watch one of his flock from the cradle to the grave; that there was no bond of union between pastors and people; and that *wealth* exercised a vast deal more influence over the dissenters than amongst Episcopalians. I found that the amount of *money* contributed by old and young, rich and poor, to Bible and missionary societies was regarded as a proof of discipleship, rather than ascribed to the varied motives which lead to such subscriptions; and that the younger members of the meeting-houses too often substituted their attention to these matters, for converted hearts and a zealous discipleship to their Lord and Saviour.

I found that few dissenting churches existed where there were not some schisms, some factions, some quarrels of a personal character more or less grave, and that the spirit of *rivalry*, which has so unspiritual and injurious a tendency, had sprung up every where amongst the partisans of *modern* dissenterism. I found never-ending wranglings, constant disputes, interminable controversies, and personalities of so

gross a character as frequently to lead to the dividing of congregations into two, and even three separate “*causes*.”

I found that dissenting ministers studied little, that, in fact, they had not time or means to do so; that some taught the children of the members of their own congregation in third-rate day schools; that others kept second and third-rate boarding-schools, and that others attended to farms, or even to merchandize, preferring to incorporate their lay with their spiritual duties to living in the poverty, which must otherwise be their lot. I found that many others devoted themselves to book-making and to tract-writing, with the view of obtaining “*salt to their porridge*,” those books and tracts necessarily savouring of their want of means, and absence of reading.

I found that the “*regium donum*,” was accepted by dissenters, though they affected to have a horror of a State provision, and that such orthodox ministers as Dr. John Pye Smith, Dr. Cox, and John Clayton, signed the same defence of their receipt of this provision with the heterodox ministers, Dr. Rees, and Robert Aspland. I found that the dissenters every where sought to evade the statute of *Mortmain*; that every where they endeavoured to

establish testamentary bequests, and to obtain government grants in their favour; and that they did not hesitate to engage in expensive law-suits for the most frivolous or party purposes. These were specimens of that religion which was so "*unworldly!*" in its character, and which the modern dissenters declare is in *perfect harmony* with the spiritual religion of its divine Founder.

I found that the altar of the dissenters was an *exclusive* altar. I found that a member of the Church of England would not be admitted to receive the Lord's Supper at an Independent or Baptist communion table, should he be desirous of so doing. I found that a vast many dissenting ministers had signally fallen away from their orthodox opinions to heterodox sentiments; and that, to adopt the language of the historian of dissenters himself (Dr. James Bennett), "that mere adventurers, or students who have been expelled from (dissenting) colleges for immorality, have obtained settlements of which they were utterly unworthy." I found that many dissenting ministers in London were too often seen at *taverns*, kept late hours, spent little time with their own families, got into the habit of smoking much, and drinking spirits and water, and

that some dreadful fallings off in spiritual life, and even moral conduct, had been the result. I found that the solid divinity of former days had become rare amongst the *nominal* descendants of the *real* Nonconformists of other times. I found that an excessive attention was paid, at the dissenting seminaries, to artificial method and claptrap style. I found that "the laity in the dissenting congregations frequently rendered the lives of their ministers wretched by tyrannical dictation, or by cruel neglect." I found that modern dissenters, both laymen and ministers, had not maintained any *unity of faith*, but had been led hither and thither by every strange and new dogma. I found that the unscriptural and anti-apostolical custom of reading only one chapter from the Bible at the morning, and one at the evening service, to dissenting congregations, had led to much less attention being paid by dissenters to the Bible, than was the case with their Nonconformist ancestors.

When I examined the *literature* of dissenters (I speak not of splendid exceptions, but of the mass)—whether I turned to single sermons, volumes of sermons, poetry, theological controversies, or periodical publications, I found nothing but stultifying mediocrity and dis-

heartening commonplaces. If the *Evangelical Magazine* was essentially *pious*, it was the piety of uneducated men; whilst the "Baptist Magazine" rivalled it in *literary insignificance*, at the same time that it could not be compared to it for its *gospel character*. All was falling off; all was inferiority.

I found (as does their own historian) among the Independents "a tendency to conformity to the world, both on the part of the ministers and the congregations, conformity to the world in dress and company, and eagerness for gain, a tendency to rivalry in the churches, instead of regarding the prosperity of each one as the gain of the whole." I found (as does also their historian) "among the *Baptists* crude men, who have, even when not Antinomians themselves, created a taste for that worst of heresies."

I found among the *Quakers* a vast deal of Socinianism, which had a blighting influence on their spiritual character. I found that others became Deists, and that it was high time that Isaac Crewdson should raise his voice against the heresies of inward light, and protest against that sort of popish suppression of the Scriptures which is so averse to the reverence paid the word of God by the Church

of England, which *daily* in its cathedral service reads that word to the people.

I found the *Calvinistic Methodists* rapidly declining, but a fierce warfare in one of their churches. I found the *Countess of Huntingdon's* college all that remained of her, with but few exceptions, for Spa-fields Chapel was deserted. I found the *Sandemanians* few, scattered, and metaphysical; the *Swedenborgians* given up to a sort of mysticism; and a new sect, called the *Irvingites*, rising into notice, not on account of their graces, but of their *impudence*.

I found some institutions established by modern dissenters, but they were exclusively *sectarian* in their character, and no large ideas, vast conceptions, and general diffusive principles ever found their way from these little red-brick hot-houses of separatism and anti-Episcopalianism. Their *schools* are all *dissenting*, their *colleges* all *dissenting*, their *societies* all *dissenting*; and the *only* religious society in which they co-operated, of a general, Christian, orthodox character, was the British and Foreign Bible Society. Even the *Hibernian* Society they have since deserted; and whether the object be home or foreign, the moment their assistance is asked to an institution, the first question they put is, "*Is it a dis-*

sending society?" or, "Is it approved by our *leading dissenting ministers?*" If not, then all means are resorted to to crush it—*anonymous letters* are set in motion, calumnies the blackest and least founded are industriously circulated, and no means are left unattended to which can secure the defeat of a general, or a Church of England project.

Having thus examined into and probed the character of modern dissenterism, I resolved on paying equal attention to the constitution, discipline, doctrines, and worship of the Church of England; and the result of such examination I shall presently supply to my readers.

The period of five years, for which I had been articled to Mr. Griffiths, had now expired: they had been well and usefully employed. All my religious tendencies had been strengthened by the blessing of the Holy Spirit, on my frequent conferences with the curate and vicar of the parish in which Mr. Griffiths resided. I had learnt thoroughly the medical profession; I had fought my way through the vast difficulties I had had to combat with, as to my educational dissenterism; and, though last, not least, I had gained the affections of one to whom I owe so much of my happiness, my instruction, and of that hope which I now

possess, that, after the conflicts, trials, and sorrows of earth shall be over, I shall, through the *alone* merits of Jesus Christ my Saviour, be admitted into the realms of eternal and perfect love.

Soon after my articles had expired I visited my NATIVE TOWN. I had been down at Christmas in every year for a few days, but they were always occupied with family converse, family feasting, visiting, and the social joys of life; but now, I returned to my father's house to reside several months, and there, aided by the counsels of those I best loved, to draw out the plan of my future life. I found that Mr. Mountain, the strict communionist minister, had lost his few followers, and died in the poor-house. I found the Independents had discarded Mr. Hawthorne, "for not having preached the gospel," as they termed it; and that my mother, disgusted with the conduct of the members to that worthy man, had left the Independents altogether, and attended only at the Baptist congregation. Old Mr. Cross had died, but not without leaving behind him an unsettled controversy as to whether there should be a *small organ* in the chapel or not; the which question had led to letters, meetings, debates, separations, resignations, and some two scores

more of all sorts of evils. I found by my subsequent correspondence with Sophia, that she had similar evils to record, as to the dissenters amongst whom she had been visiting during the last twelve months. The Independent minister had been accusing, from the pulpit, his Baptist *brother* of “*seducing* his members and congregation from him by the *dangerous novelty of immersion* ;” whilst the Baptist minister had replied, “that his Independent brother, unable to keep up his congregation on account of his want of talent and eloquence, was now unjustly throwing the blame upon *him*.” Then the Independent minister had accused, from the pulpit, some Arian Baptist of having “*forged* a New Testament of *his own* to suit his purposes ;” and this Arian Baptist had summed up the controversy by bringing an action for defamation.

The old trust-deed of the former Mr. Chapman’s meeting had led to long and useless litigation ; for at last the plan was hit upon of the only surviving trustee appointing new trustees, and making *wholly new trusts in favour of the Independents*. This was *illegal*, but then there was no one to contest the legality ; and it was contrary to the *original trusts* created by Miss Timmings, but the only member of the

Timmings's family had died in the poor-house; Mr. M'Kenzie had left the Scotch secession in Wiltshire, and gone back to the Land o'Cakes and the good old Presbyteral church of his forefathers; George Palmer and his party had died and been dispersed, and those who had formed a new faction had no money or taste for new litigation; and though the Baptists had a most sincere *hatred* for their *Independent brethren*, still they had not the money requisite for a Chancery contest, *especially as* THEY *would not gain by the conflict*. So the Independent chapel had now an Independent trust-deed; the old one was carefully put away like poison having "ARSENIC" marked on it, and new trustees and new deacons were raging and boiling away without a pastor, with but half the number of former hearers, with only a salary of £100 for the minister (whoever he might be), but with about two dozen candidates from all the new and old dissenting colleges for the vacant place. As to Mr. Subtle, the Socinian, he preached to empty pews, and the Presbyterian *dissenting* cause had fallen off very sensibly. The good old Scotch church, which possesses so many burning and shining lights, had no place of worship in our town.

There was but one temple of the Living God

into which neither heresy nor schism, neither controversy nor sedition, neither violence nor worldly policy had entered; it was the hallowed fane of St. Mary's. There the Rev. Mr. Montague, year after year, week after week, sabbath after sabbath, had faithfully preached the word of God to large and sanctified congregations; there the prayers and the homilies (yes, the *homilies* so much neglected) of the Church of England, had been read with fervour and unction. There the old true Catholic faith of the apostles, alike free from the heresies of Antinomianism, Socinianism, and Popery, as from the errors of modern dissent-erism, had been professed and believed by thousands either living or dead. There the same sacraments and in the same form as received by the earliest disciples, were administered with faith and humility. There the old organ had pealed its sacred notes and reverberated along the roof and the walls its glorious and hallowed minstrelsy. The altar, the velvet cushions, the pulpit, the churchwarden's pew, and what was of far more interest to me, my grandfather's old pew, in which he had so often listened to the excellent Mr. Seymour, were untouched, unaltered; and as I sat on the tomb of my ancestors, after the conclusion of

the afternoon service in dear old St. Mary's, I thought of my deceased aunt Mary and my aged grand-parents, and of how such losses tear the heart, and then of that most consolatory of all Christian themes for reflection, that after the sorrows, separations, and conflicts of time, those who have really loved their Saviour upon earth shall for ever in his presence enjoy the hallowed society of each other in heaven. I remembered that one who had dearly loved her father had written, when smarting beneath the pangs of her recent bereavement: "But for the fair hope that all the pungency of heart-riving separations, such as these, from the objects of our purest affections is left to the survivor; that their bitterness is not shared; that the void, cold, unsearchable, of such dire privations, is known only to him who is left behind; while to the departed all clouds are cleared away, all storms are hushed, all pangs are chased by bliss; but for this evangelical hope and spiritual belief, how could the fragile human frame be strong enough to sustain the convulsed human mind in the writhings of its first desolating experience of a woe which, by one fatal stroke, seems for the moment to leave life without a claim?" For such is the *first* in-

stinctive imperious sensation upon such dread catastrophes. But then I also remembered—

“ The loved but not the lost !
Oh no, they have not ceased to be,
Nor live alone in memory ;
'Tis *we* who still are toss'd
O'er life's wild sea, 'tis we who die :
They only live whose life is immortality.

“ The loved but not the lost !
Why should our ceaseless tears be shed
O'er the cold turf that wraps the dead,
As if their names were cross'd
From out the ' Book of Life !' Ah no !
'Tis we who scarcely live, that linger still below.”

One of the brightest hopes of a future state is, that we shall meet again those whom we have loved upon earth ; and one of the sources of our happiness will probably consist in being in the society of our Christian friends, purified from the sins and frailties of mortality, with all spiritual affections sweetly attuned, with the sensibilities of our hearts sanctified, and with the faculties of our purified minds infinitely more elevated and enlarged. We shall then be able to comprehend subjects which are now too vast for human conception, the sublimity of that Deity who called us into being ; but, above all, to sound the mysteries of that grace, which

led the Son of God to visit this planet of darkness and of death, to secure to its guilty inmates glory and happiness for ever.

During my stay at my native town, I formally apprized Mr. and Mrs. Griffiths of a fact, with which they were not by any means unacquainted, *viz.* my attachment to Sophia, and communicated to them my intention of purchasing the medical practice of an elderly gentleman in that same town, who sought to retire from business, and who was by no means indisposed to adopt me as his successor. Though my love for Sophia was a subject on which Mr. and Mrs. Griffiths had frequently conversed with each other, they had not spoken of it to her or to myself. As Sophia and I had met but seldom, always in their presence, and had carried on no correspondence during her long absence at her grandmother's, they had hoped that "that love which sometimes boys feel, and poets feign," might have given way, in one or both of us, to other thoughts, predilections, or affections. But now the question had to be met, and they were necessarily embarrassed. On the one hand, my moral and religious character was not disapproved by them; but on the other hand, I had become in heart, though not by any decisive

act of my life, *a Churchman*. Such an union they regarded as an “*unequal yoking*,” especially as they feared, from the letters she had written them, that their daughter’s dissenterism might be shaken, should our proposed correspondence take place. Then as to my prospects in life, though they were most respectable, yet I was very young, had no certainty that I should retain the practice of my venerable predecessor, and must expect if I became a Churchman to lose all *dissenting* connections. So Mr. Griffiths wrote to my father, instead of to myself, and requested his intervention to postpone indefinitely, if not wholly to prevent, by his counsels and entreaties, the renewal of a friendship and communications, which had been too few, in his opinion, to be lasting or serious. My father examined the question with the eye of a party not *personally* interested in such matters, yet still he evinced the greatest possible affection, and finally, after weeks of hesitation, resolved on writing to Mr. Griffiths to express his opinion that Sophia and myself ought to meet, and ascertain from each other if our sentiments remained unaltered.

This proposal of my father led to much correspondence between our respective parents, whilst I availed myself of this state of indeci-

sion to write to Sophia. She was unchanged. Her character was as ardent, affectionate, and impassioned as ever; but modesty and truth, as well as religion and knowledge, gave a harmony to that character which rendered her even more lovely in my eyes than when first I saw, six years previously, her fine dark eyes and rosy cheeks brightening the front parlour of her father's dwelling. In one word, we were devotedly attached to each other, and she had at once the courage and the sincerity to avow that attachment to those to whom she owed her being and her past happiness.

The dissenting minister, when appealed to by Mr. Griffiths, objected in the strongest terms to the proposed marriage, and attempted to "*recall Sophia to a sense of her duties,*" by reading her long lessons against church establishments. But an active correspondence had now commenced between us, and she took my advice respectfully to challenge her dissenting pastor to a written controversy. The proposed interview between Sophia and myself was at length agreed to; and I found her even more charming than when my young heart first resigned to her its hopes of bliss. For several months I remained in the metropolis to pass my examinations, obtain my certificates, and

prepare for future practice in my native town. During that time we examined together, with the attention which the subject merited, the duty of remaining dissenters or of coming forward in the presence of the world, and professing openly an attachment to the Established Church. Mr. and Mrs. Griffiths, annoyed by quarrels and separations in various dissenting societies and circles with which they had been connected, were partially aware of the bad *practical* tendencies of *modern* dissenterism; but then they always maintained that these were blemishes on the mirror, spots on the sun, and not to be justly attributed to dissenting *principles*. In vain did I direct them to the history of the old Nonconformists, to the testimonies of eminent Nonconformist writers in favour of church establishments, or to the difference between the spirit and the tendencies of *ancient* and *modern* dissenterism. Sophia was more accessible. She had not the prejudices of half a century to overcome, and yet she was averse to any change which should not be based on examination and conviction. "It is *not* enough for me," she said, "to know and feel, as I do know and feel, the errors and evils of dissenterism; I must also be satisfied, that if I change my profession of faith, it will

be to belong to a church where the same, or even greater errors and evils, shall not be found." For more than six months, she conducted with patience and zeal this examination, and was at last so convinced that the constitution, discipline, doctrines, and worship of the Church of England were in *all respects in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, and with the first Christian churches*, that she became in heart, mind, and soul, an Episcopalian.

I returned to my native place, purchased the professional practice of the worthy Dr. Moody, took the prettiest and most airy, as well as pleasantest house in "*our town*," and prepared to receive her who was destined by a kind and merciful Providence, to be its chief ornament and most charming occupant.

The dissenters were much "scandalized" at my frequent attendance at *St. Mary's*, "especially," they said, "since I was about to marry a daughter of a noted dissenter in London, and was myself the grandson of a dissenting deacon, and the son of an Independent." Some passed me in the streets without noticing me; others vowed "they would *rather die* than call in George Rawston, who had *deserted* the religion of his ancestors," forgetting that my ancestor was a Churchman. The old ladies

declared "that they would rather see all their daughters and grand-daughters die old maids than that *one* of *them* should marry *me*." The dissenting minister went as far as to reproach me openly, and my poor father and mother were so teased with their scandal and impertinence, that they desired they might no more be spoken to on a subject which was purely of a personal, or family character. As to Mr. and Mrs. Griffiths, they were annoyed by the change in my views, but were much more grieved at their daughter's approaching desertion of Independency, and entreated their minister to *make one more attempt to convince Sophia of her errors*. The *written* controversy which the reverend gentleman had been challenged to by Sophia, and which he had at first declined, he now provoked, and several months were again occupied in long but interesting discussions.

But true love, like truth, will at last prevail; and Sophia and myself were *married*. We were *both Episcopalians*, but what was of even *far greater* importance, we were *Christians*. We married with the consent of all who loved us, and after the usual period of "a tour to the lakes," proceeded to my native town. There we had two sorts of receptions to meet

with ; some gladly, others coldly : some viewed us as heretics, others said "*we were blind as bats,*" and the Baptists declared, "*that there was not a pin to choose between us and Papists.*" We arrived on a Tuesday. On Wednesday and Thursday we saw and conversed much with the Reverend Mr. Montague ; he was satisfied with our *spiritual* state ; and we then requested that on the following Sunday we might receive "*The ministration of baptism,*" and be admitted into the Christian church. We devoted the Friday and Saturday to prayer and fasting, and on Sunday morning proceeded to the church of St. Mary's, accompanied by some Christian friends to whom we had communicated our intentions. Most sincerely did we join with our beloved national and spiritual pastor when he prayed,—

"Almighty and everlasting God, Heavenly Father, we give thee humble thanks for that thou hast vouchsafed to call us to the knowledge of thy grace, and faith in Thee : increase this knowledge and confirm this faith in us evermore. Give thy Holy Spirit to these persons, that they may be born again, and be made heirs of everlasting salvation ; through our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Spirit now and for ever. Amen."

How solemn was that hour ! In the face of the Church and the world, we had undertaken to “obediently keep God’s holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of our lives.” This was a second marriage ; we had now been married to the Church : our *first* union had been *worldly, earthly* ; our *second* was *spiritual and eternal*.

“ *Pray without ceasing,*” said our beloved and spiritual guide, as he pressed our hands between his. His benevolent features beamed at once gratitude to God, and love for us, as he concluded the last exhortation of the Church service. “ PRAY WITHOUT CEASING,” he repeated, as we left him in the churchyard ; and together we repeated the lines—

“ Go when the morning shineth,
Go when the moon is bright,
Go when the eve declineth,
Go with the shades of night ;
Go with pure mind and feeling,
Fling earthly thought away,
And in thy chamber kneeling,
Do thou in secret pray.

“ Remember all who love thee,
All who are loved by thee ;
Pray too for those who hate thee,
If any such there be ;

Then for thyself in meekness
A blessing humbly claim,
And link with each petition
Thy great Redeemer's name.

“ Or if 'tis here denied thee
In solitude to pray,
Should holy thoughts come o'er thee,
When friends are round thy way,
E'en then the silent breathing
Of thy spirit raised above,
Will reach His throne of glory,
Who is mercy, truth, and love.

“ Oh ! not a joy or blessing
With this can we compare,
The power that he has given us,
To pour our souls in prayer !
Whene'er thou pin'st in sadness,
Before his footstool fall ;
And remember in thy gladness,
His grace who gave thee all.”

My *Dissenting life* had now terminated. My life as a member of the Catholic and Apostolical Church of England was to commence. I began, as did Sophia, by receiving at the very next confirmation by the Bishop, that sacred right ; and on the next Sunday, at *dear old St. Mary's*, the communion of the body and blood of our blessed Redeemer. Not as Papists, not as dissenters, and not as Puseyites, did we receive this Holy Sacrament, but as Christian members of the Catholic Church in England,

according to the creeds, faith, and customs of the apostles and first disciples of Christianity. And now, in that same old family pew where once my respected, though mistaken grandfather listened for so many years with attention and delight to the prayers and worship of our Church, we are seated, now surrounded by our children on the Sabbath, and (when practicable) on the week-day, to pray for the whole Catholic Church, but especially for that pure part of it to which we belong. No more dissenting feuds harass us, no more doubts molest us; no uncertainties as to right or wrong embarrass us; but we look forward to the troubles of life without alarm, to the close of life without dismay, and to the state of being which is to succeed it, with hope and joy.

FINIS.

ERRATUM.—Page 20, line 8, *for* Mr. John Bogue, *read* Dr. David Bogue.

Printed by J. L. Cox and Sons, 75, Great Queen Street,
Lincoln's-Inn Fields.

MR. THOMAS CARLYLE'S WORKS.

I.

Second Edition.

In 3 vols. 12mo. price 1l. 5s., cloth and lettered,

FRENCH REVOLUTION. A HISTORY.

VOL. I.—THE BASTILLE. VOL. II.—THE CONSTITUTION.

VOL. III.—THE GUILLOTINE.

II.

In 1 vol. 12mo. price 10s. 6d., cloth and lettered,

ON HEROES, HERO-WORSHIP, AND THE HEROIC IN HISTORY.

SIX LECTURES.

Reported, with Emendations and Additions.

III.

A new Edition, revised.

In 3 vols. 12mo. price 1l. 5s., cloth and lettered,

TRANSLATION OF GOETHE'S WILHELM MEISTER;

CONTAINING

MEISTER'S APPRENTICESHIP AND MEISTER'S TRAVELS.

IV.

Second Edition.

In 1 vol. 12mo. price 10s. 6d., cloth and lettered,

SARTOR RESARTUS;

THE LIFE AND OPINIONS OF HERR TEUFELSDRÖCKH.

In Three Books.

V.

Second Edition.

In 5 vols. 12mo., price 2l. 5s., cloth and lettered,

CRITICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS ESSAYS;

COLLECTED AND REPUBLISHED.

VI.

Second Edition.

In 1 vol. small octavo, price 5s., cloth and lettered,

CHARTISM.

JAMES FRASER, REGENT STREET, LONDON.

RECENTLY PUBLISHED.

I.

In 1 vol. crown 8vo., with a map, 10s. 6d. cloth,
**THE PORTS, ARSENALS, AND DOCK-
YARDS OF FRANCE.**

By A TRAVELLER.

Reprinted from *The Times*, with Additions.

II.

In French case, cloth 5s., roan 6s.

FRASER'S
PANORAMIC PLAN OF LONDON.

WITH ALL THE IMPROVEMENTS TO CHRISTMAS, 1840.

III.

Fourth Edition, 12mo., 5s. cloth,

ON THE
NOBILITY OF THE BRITISH GENTRY.

By SIR JAMES LAWRENCE, Knight of Malta.

IV.

In 1 vol. small 8vo., 8s. cloth,

**THE YOUNG CONCHOLOGIST'S BOOK OF
SPECIES. UNIVALVES.**

Containing Descriptions of 600 Species, and Illustrated by
numerous Figures exquisitely engraved; some
beautifully coloured.

By SYLVANUS HANLEY, of Wadham College.

V.

Second Edition, in 8vo., 10s. 6d. cloth,

LIFE OF WALLENSTEIN.

By Lieut.-Col. MITCHELL. With a Portrait after Vandyke.

VI.

In 1 vol. imperial 8vo. price 2l. 12s. 6d. cloth; or India Proofs,
5l. 5s. elegantly bound in whole morocco, gilt leaves,

THE PALACE OF ARCHITECTURE:

By GEORGE WIGHTWICK, Architect.

Illustrated with a Coloured Map, and Two Hundred and Eleven
Plates and Woodcuts. The Plates engraved by Le
Keux, Brooke, Cates, Humphrys, Winkles,
&c. The Woodcuts, by Brooke.

JAMES FRASER, REGENT STREET, LONDON.

4 20

My Life by an Ex-Dissenter

London 1841

Polem. 1636 k

urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10774907-7